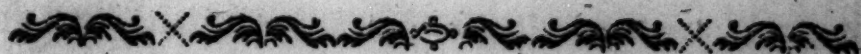


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THE
HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
GILBLAS.





HISTORICAL

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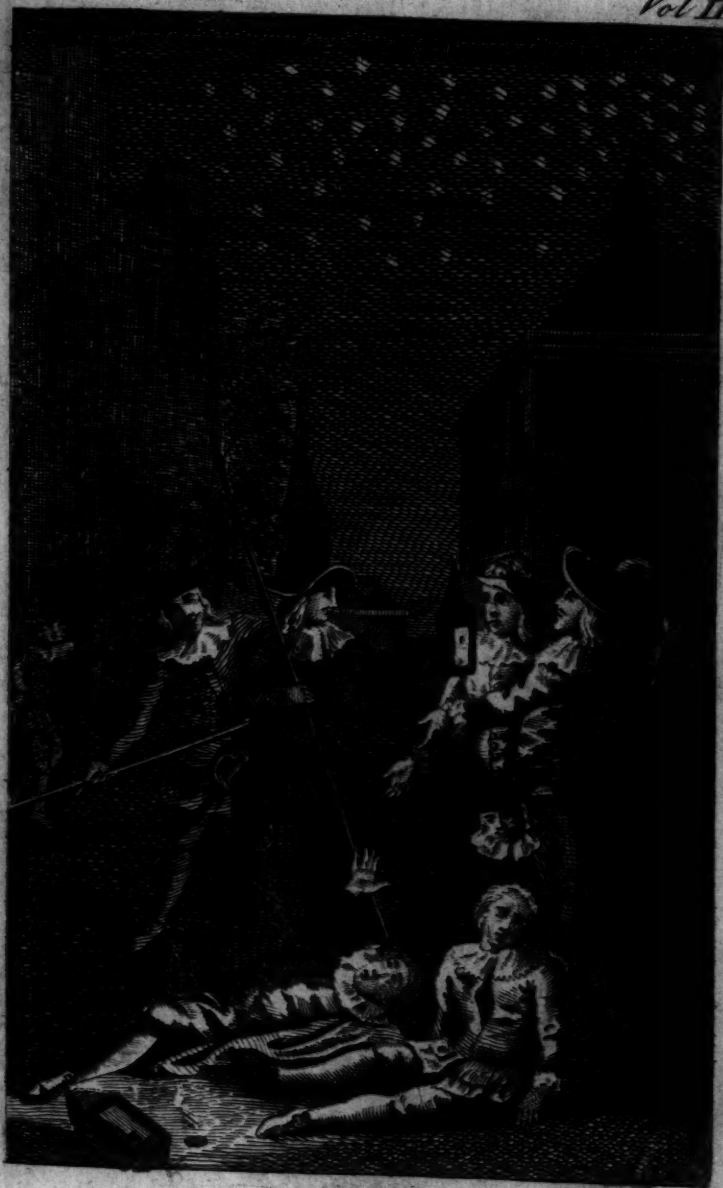
OF

GILBERT AS



FRONTISPIECE

Vol II



THE ¹⁶/₁₀₅ A3
HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
GILBLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

Newly Translated from the FRENCH of

M. DELASAGE.

To which is prefixed

Some ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR'S LIFE.

Illustrated with COPPERPLATES.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. MASSEY and W. SPROUT, in
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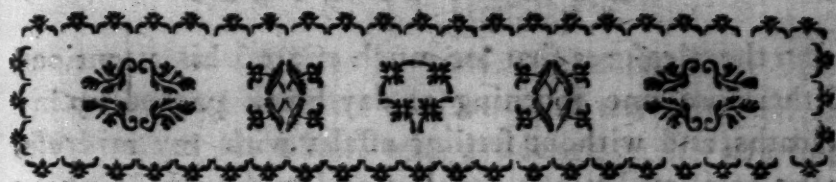
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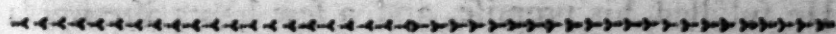
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THE
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GIL BLAS
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BOOK IV.



CHAP. I.

Gil Blas being disgusted at the vicious Manners of the Actresses, leaves Arsenia, and gets into a more reputable Family.



Otwithstanding the general corruption of manners which environed me on every side, I yet retained some small degree of honour and religion, and therefore determined to leave the service of Arsenia, and have no more to do with Laura, though she still possessed a share of my heart, in spite of her flagrant infidelity. How happy is the man who can thus profit by the cool moments of reflexion which inter-

rupt the pleasures that too much engross his attention! I therefore one morning at day-break packed up my cloaths, and without settling affairs with my mistress, who owed me little or nothing, and without bidding my dear Laura farewell, I left the house, which was an uninterrupted scene of debauchery. No sooner had I executed so noble a resolution than Heaven rewarded me for it; for chancing to meet with the steward of my late master Don Matthias, I saluted him, and he recollecting my face, stopped and enquired if I was in any service at present. I replied, that I had just come out of my place; that after having staid about a month with Arsenia, of whose behaviour I was not very fond, I had now left her of my own accord, to preserve my innocence. The steward, like a man of a very tender conscience, applauded me for the step I had taken, and told me, that since I was so virtuous, he would use his utmost efforts to settle me advantageously. He fulfilled his promise, and a few hours afterwards introduced me into the service of Don Vincent de Guzman, with whose steward he was intimately acquainted.

It was impossible for me to be placed in a better family, and therefore in the end had no cause to complain for serving in it. My master was a very wealthy old nobleman, who had lived many years without either wife or law-suit; the physicians having carried her off this mortal stage by endeavouring to free her of a cough, which she might still have been troubled with, had she not come under their hands. Instead of courting another spouse, he closely applied himself to the education of Aurora his daughter, the only fruit of their marriage, who was then entering into her twenty-sixth year, and who might be justly called an accomplished lady, for with no common share of beauty, she was very sensible, having spared



notrouble to cultivate her natural genius. Don Vincent, though he was no conjurer, had the happy talent of managing his affairs with prudence. He had one fault, which, however, is pardonable in an old man; he took great pleasure in talking, and particularly of wars and bloodshed. If any body unluckily touched upon this string when he was present, he immediately put the heroical trumpet to his mouth, and happy were the hearers, if they got off for the relation of three battles and two sieges. Having spent two-thirds of his life in the army, his memory was an inexhaustible source of exploits, which were not always heard with so much pleasure as he related them. He was besides very prolix, and stammered greatly, which made his narrations very disagreeable. But, taking him altogether, I never knew a nobleman of so fair a character. He had a great deal of æquanimity, and was neither whimsical nor obstinate; a qualification of which few people of quality are possessed. Though he was a good œconomist, yet he lived very genteelly. His domesticks consisted of several lacqueys, and three women who attended upon Aurora. I soon perceived that Don Matthias's steward had procured me a good place, and therefore used all my endeavours to keep myself in it. I began first by reconnoitring the ground; that is, studying the tempers of every individual in the family; then, regulating my conduct by the observations I made, I soon gained the esteem of my master, and the love of all my fellow-servants.

I had hardly lived a month with Don Vincent, when I imagined I perceived his daughter distinguished me from all the valets in the house. Whenever her eyes happened to fix upon me, I remarked a kind of complaisance in her countenance, which I never saw when she looked upon my fellows. If I had not li-

ved among fops and players, I should never have taken it into my head, to think that Aurora had the smallest regard for me; but I was much spoiled among those gentlemen, who make little difference betwixt a lady of the most virtuous, and one of the most vicious character. If I may give credit to those buffoons, said I to myself, the women of quality have their whims as well as other people, and are sometimes very beneficial, if a man does but know how to make a right use of them: And who can tell but my mistress may be as capricious as her neighbours. No, no, added I immediately, she is not of this kind, she is none of those Messalinas, who, forgetting their exalted birth, unworthily throw away their affections upon a dunghill, and dishonour themselves without blushing. She is rather one of those virtuous, though tender-hearted young ladies, who, satisfied with the bounds prescribed by honour to their inclinations, do not scruple to entertain and inspire a delicate passion, which may amuse them without the least danger.

Such were my sentiments of Aurora, though I did not well know what to think of her behaviour. Whenever she saw me, she smiled, and an expression of joy was visible in her countenance; so that, without passing for a fool, any man might have been ensnared by such fair appearances as these. I could not resist them any longer, but concluded, that she was very much captivated with my merit, and began to reckon myself one of those fortunate servants, whose lives are by love rendered agreeable and easy. That I might appear in some measure less unworthy of the favour which my good fortune intended to procure me, I began to be nicer about my person than formerly; I spent all the money I had in linen, washes, and essences. My first employment in the morning was to dress and perfume myself, that I might not be in dishabille, if I had

occasion to appear before my mistress. With this and other airs which I assumed, I flattered myself that my happiness speedily approached.

Among Aurora's women there was one called Ortiz, who was pretty old, and had served upwards of twenty years in the family, nursing the young lady; and was still in the capacity of a duenna, though she no longer performed the odious part of that function; but on the contrary, instead of being a spy upon Aurora's actions, as formerly, her sole business was now to conceal them. One evening Dame Ortiz having found an opportunity of speaking to me privately, whispered to me, that if I was wise and secret, I should be in the garden at midnight, where I should be informed of things which would not be disagreeable to me. I squeezed the duenna's hand, and told her, that she might depend upon my appearance at that time; and we parted immediately, for fear of being surprized. How tedious did the time seem from that instant to supper, though we supped very early, and from supper to my master's going to bed! Every thing seemed to be done ten times slower than it was wont; and to crown my chagrin, when Don Vincent retired to his chamber, instead of thinking of sleep, he began to fight over again all his battles in Portugal, which had before stunned my ears an hundred times. But one thing which he had never told me before, reserving it till that night, was the name of every particular officer who had performed any wondrous achievement, and he even recited their exploits. How impatient was I till he finished! However, at last the larum ceased, and he went to bed: Upon which I flew to my little apartment, from whence there was a passage by a pair of back-stairs into the garden, and anointed my whole body with essence; I then put on a clean

shirt, which I strongly perfumed; and having neglected nothing that might contribute to excite my mistress's affection, away I went to the place appointed.

Ortiz not being there when I arrived, I concluded that she had been tired with waiting, and was retired to her chamber, and that the long-wished-for moment was past. I began to wish Don Vincent at the devil for this, and as I was curling his wars and campaigns, I heard the clock strike ten. When I heard this, I imagined that the clock was wrong, and could not persuade myself that it was less than one o'clock. But I happened to be deceived on the right side, for a full quarter of an hour after this, I heard another clock strike ten again. Very well, said I to myself, I have now no more nor less than two swinging hours to dance attendance, and they shall not complain of my punctuality. How shall I employ my time till twelve? I will e'en take a turn in the garden, and study the part I am to play, which is a pretty new one to me, who am but a novice in the whims of women of quality. I know well enough how to act with common wenches and actresses: you accost them with a familiar air, and come to the point at once; but ladies of fashion are not thus to be dealt with. There, I suppose, the gallant must be complaisant, polite, tender, and respectful, though not too timorous neither; instead of endeavouring to hasten the violence of his transports, he must patiently wait for the moment of the fair one's weakness.

This was my opinion of the matter, and in this manner did I determine to behave to Aurora. I comforted myself as well as I was able with the thoughts of presently seeing myself at the feet of that adorable object, and of saying a thousand passionate things to her. I called to mind all those scraps of plays I had

acquired when I was amongst the theatrical gentry; thinking they might be of service to me, not doubting but I could apply them properly enough, and hoped to pass for a wit, after the example of some players whom I knew; though all the wit I could boast of was a good memory. Absorbed in these reflexions, with which I was more agreeably entertained than with my master's warlike achievements, I heard the clock strike eleven. Upon this I took heart, and plunged again into my reverie, sometimes walking, and sometimes sitting in an arbour at the farther end of the garden. At length the long-expected hour of twelve struck, and in a few minutes Ortiz, as punctual, though not so impatient as myself, appeared. Signior Gil Blas, said she, how long have you been waiting here? Two hours, replied I. You were determined then, said she laughing, not to be behind hand: It is a pleasure to have an assignation with you. And indeed, continued she with a serious air, you can never pay too dear for the good fortune I bring you. My mistress is desirous of talking with you in private: I shall say no more; you must hear the rest from her own mouth. Follow me, and you shall presently see her in her apartment. Upon which Ortiz took me by the hand, and conducted me to her through a little private door, of which she kept the key.



C H A P. II.

In what Manner Aurora received Gil Blas, and what Conversation passed between them.

I Stepped forward in the most respectful manner, and saluted Aurora, who was in a dishabille. She

received me with a smiling countenance, made me sit down near her, notwithstanding all my sham excuses, and told Ortiz to retire into the next room. This introduction pleased me vastly, and she thus addressed me: You must certainly have perceived, Gil Blas, that I have beheld you with a more favourable eye than any of my father's domesticks; yet even though you have not observed my regard for you, this night's step will fully convince you of it.

I prevented her from saying any more, by immediately jumping from my seat, and in a transport throwing myself at her feet; thus acting the part of a man of gallantry, and exempting her from the confusion of a more formal explanation. Ah! madam, cried I, is it possible that Gil Blas, hitherto the foot-ball of fortune, and the outcast of creation, is so happy as to inspire you with sentiments—Speak lower, interrupted Aurora smiling, you will awake my maids, who are asleep in the next room. Rise, take your seat again, and hear me to the end without interruption. Yes, Gil Blas, resumed she with a graver countenance, I am your well-wisher, and to give you a proof of my esteem, I will intrust you with a secret, upon which depends the entire repose of my life. I am in love with a handsome young gentleman, nobly descended, and very rich, called Don Lewis Pacheco: I have never yet spoken to him, though I have frequently seen him in public; I am even ignorant of his character, and do not know but he may be a person of bad morals. This is what I want to know, and make choice of you for this purpose, being confident I may intrust you with the commission. I hope you will acquit yourself with such address and discretion, that I shall have no reason to complain for making you my confident.

My mistress now paused, to hear what reply I had to make. I was at first a little confounded at being so disagreeably undeceived, but I presently recollected myself, and having overcome the shame with which a piece of temerity that proves unsuccessful is always attended, I expressed so much zeal for my lady's interest, and so ardently devoted myself to her service, that tho' she might still continue to think that I had flattered myself so far as to think she was in love with me, I at least convinced her that I knew how to make amends for my folly. I demanded but two days to bring her a perfect account of the character of Don Lewis. After this she called Dame Ortiz, who conducted me back into the garden, and left me there, saying at parting, Good night, Gil Blas, you have given so noble a proof of your punctuality, that I need not recommend it to you to be early at the next assignation.

I returned to my apartment not without some chagrin, to find my expectations baulked. However, I was wise enough to reflect that it was more suitable to my condition to be the confident rather than the lover of my mistress. I also considered that this might be a profitable employment for me, as the messengers of love are generally handsomely paid for their trouble; and therefore went to bed fully determined to execute whatever Aurora should entrust to my care. As soon as I arose the next morning, I went out about this affair, and had no difficulty in discovering the house of so famous a cavalier as Don Lewis. I enquired into his character in the neighbourhood, but no one could fully inform me of it. This made me renew my enquiries the next day, when I proved more successful. Accidentally meeting a young man of my acquaintance, we stopt to chat a little. In the mean time a friend of his made up to us, and told his comrade that

Don Joseph Pacheco, the father of Don Lewis, had just turned him from his service, on suspicion of having drunk a cask of his wine. I seized this opportunity of fully informing myself of every thing I wanted to know, and succeeded so well by the questions I asked, that I returned home very well pleased at my being able to keep my word with my mistress. The next night was the time I was to see her again, at the same hour, and in the same manner as before; but I did not suffer so much uneasiness that night, and was so far from hearing my master's stories with impatience, that I myself introduced the subject of his campaigns. I waited for twelve with the utmost tranquillity, and I did not go into the garden till I heard it strike by several clocks, void of essences and perfumes, resolving for the future to spare myself that expence.

I found the trusty Ortiz at the place of rendezvous, and she upbraided me in a satirical manner for having slackened my diligence. I made no reply, but followed her to Aurora's chamber, who immediately at my entrance enquired if I had got good intelligence of Don Don Lewis. Yes, madam, said I, and I will in two words inform you of it. Know then, in the first place, that he will soon set out on his return to Salamanca, in order to finish his studies. He is a cavalier of great honour and probity, and being a Castilian and a gentleman, he is not destitute of valour. He is also very sensible and witty, and his behaviour is very engaging; but that which you will perhaps dislike the most of all you have yet heard is, that he is too much of the temper of most of our young noblemen, being a great rake. Would you believe it? Young as he is, he has already two actresses in keeping. How! Gil Blas, is that really possible? Are you sure that your information is good? Indeed, madam, replied I, I do not in the least

doubt it, being told so by a servant, who was turned away from his father's service this morning; and servants are commonly pretty ingenuous, when they talk of their master's failings. Besides, he keeps company with Don Alexo Ségur, Don Antonio Centelles, and Don Fernando de Gamboa, and that alone is a plain demonstration of his libertinism. It is enough, Gil Blas, cried she sighing; I am determined on the credit of your report to combat my unworthy affection, which, though it has already taken root too deeply in my heart, I do not despair to tear it out. There, continued she, giving me a small purse well filled, take that for your trouble; have a care of disclosing my secret, and remember that I confide entirely in your secrecy.

I told Aurora that she need not be in the least uneasy upon that head, as I was the very Harpocrates † of faithful confidants. Thus saying, I withdrew, impatient to view the contents of my purse, which amounted to twenty pistoles. If my mistress pays me so handsomely for such unwelcome news, said I to myself, what would she not have given me, if I had brought her welcome tidings? and I began to repent that I had not imitated the lawyers, who sometimes conceal the real matter of fact in their verbal processes. I was sorry for having nipped in the bud an intrigue that might have been so advantageous to me; but, however, I had the comfort to find myself indemnified for the charge I had so foolishly put myself to in essences and perfumes.

† He was worshipped as the God of Silence by the antients,



CHAP. III.

The great Revolution that happened in the Family of Don Vincent, and the strange Project with which Love inspired Aurora.

NOT long after this adventure my master fell sick. His disease was so violent, that had he even been younger we had reason to dread the issue. The moment he was seized, the two most celebrated physicians of Madrid were sent for. The name of the one was Dr. Andros, and of the other Dr. Oquetos, who having carefully examined the patient, agreed, that the humours of his body were in a fermentation, though in every thing else their opinions were different. We must immediately, said Andros, purge off the humours, though they be crude, while they continue in this violent agitation, as it were of flux and reflux, lest they settle upon some noble part. On the other hand, Oquetos maintained that they ought to wait till the humours were concocted, before they should make use of purgation. But your method, resumed the first, is quite the reverse of that of the king of physic: He orders purgation in the beginning of the most violent fevers, and says in express terms, that we should not fail to purge speedily, when the humours are in the orgasm, that is to say, in a state of fermentation. Ay, there is your mistake, replied Oquetos; Hippocrates does not by the word orgasm mean the fermentation, but the concoction of the humours. Our doctors now became passionate. One quotes the Greek text, and introduces all the authors who are of his opinion; the other, relying on a Latin translation, outbawls his ad-

versary. Which of them was in the right, my master was not a proper person to decide, but fixed upon him who had dispatched most patients; I mean the eldest of the two. Upon which Andros, who was the younger, marched off, but not without darting some severe reflections upon his senior about his interpretation of the word orgasm. Oquetos, who came of victorious, acting agreeably to the principles of Dr. Sangrado, began his work by ordering my master to be copiously bled, deferring his cathartic till the humours were concocted: but Death, who I suppose was afraid the purgation so wisely delayed would rob him of his prey, prevented the concoction, and carried off Don Vincent. Such was the end of my master, who perished because his doctor was ignorant of the Greek language.

Aurora having buried her father with all suitable pomp, took possession of his estate, and being now her own mistress, she turned off some of her domestics, rewarding them agreeable to their good services, and retired to a seat she had on the banks of the Tagus, between Sacedon, and Buendia. I had the good fortune to be one of those whom she retained, and who went into the country with her, where I happily became a necessary person. Notwithstanding the faithful account I had given her of Don Lewis, she still retained a passionate regard for him, or rather not having been able to overcome her passion, she had given herself up entirely to it; and being no longer under a necessity of taking precautions to speak with me in private, Gil Blas, said she to me sighing, I cannot forget Don Lewis, notwithstanding all my endeavours to expel him from my remembrance; he is still present, not such as you have described him to me, plunged in every species of debauchery, but such as I could wish him to be, ten-

der, amorous, and constant. Thus saying, she began to shed some tears, which affected me so much, that I could hardly refrain from weeping also, and I could not make my court to her better than by appearing concerned at her uneasiness. I see thou art of a very tender nature, my friend, continued she, after having dried her beautiful eyes, and I am so well pleased with thy zeal, that I am determined to reward it. I have now more need than ever, dear Gil Blas, of your assistance: I will inform you of the design I have formed, which you no doubt will think very capricious. Know then, that I intend to set out immediately for Salamanca, where I will dress myself like a cavalier, and, under the feigned name of Don Felix, get acquainted with Pacheco, whose friendship and confidence I will endeavour to obtain. I will frequently converse with him about Aurora de Guzman, whose cousin I will pretend to be. Perhaps he will desire to see her; and then my expectation will be answered. We will have two different lodgings at Salamanca; in one, I will be Don Felix, in the other, Aurora, and presenting myself to the eyes of Don Lewis, sometimes in the habit of a man, and sometimes in my own, I hope I may by degrees draw him into my snare. I must confess, added she, this is an extravagant project, but my passion hurries me away, and the innocence of my intentions makes me quite blind to the danger I run.

My opinion was pretty much the same as Aurora's, respecting the hazard of the enterprise: yet, however imprudent I thought it, I resolved not to act the pedagogue, but on the contrary began to gild the pill, and undertook to prove that this wild enterprise was no more than a piece of harmless wit; and could have no bad consequence. This construction pleased my mistress

vastly, for lovers like flattery even in their most extravagant fancies. We no longer looked upon this affair in any other light than as a comedy, which we were to perform as well as we possibly could. Having chosen our actors out of our own family, the parts were distributed without the least clamour or quarrelling, not being yet professed players. It was resolved that Dame Ortiz should appear in the character of Aurora's aunt, under the name of Donna Ximena de Guzman, attended by a man and a maid, and that Aurora, dressed like a cavalier, should have me for her valet de chambre, and one of her maids disguised like a page to wait upon her in private. The characters being thus regulated, we returned to Madrid, where we heard Don Lewis still was, but that he would soon set out for Salamanca; upon which we got our acting-cloaths made with all imaginable speed. When they were finished, my mistress caused them to be conveniently packed up, until we should find a proper time and place for putting them on. Then committing the care of her house to her steward, she set out in a coach drawn by four mules, and took the road to the kingdom of Leon, with all those servants who had parts to act in this comedy.

We had already traversed Old Castile, when the axle-tree of the coach broke, between Avila and Villafior, about three or four hundred paces from a castle, which we saw at the foot of a mountain. Night approaching, we were greatly at a loss what to do, when a peasant happening to pass by, rid us of our uneasiness, by telling us, that the castle we saw belonged to Donna Elvira, widow of Don Pedro de Pinarez, and he extolled her so much, that my mistress sent me to the castle to beg a lodging for that night. Elvira did not belie the countryman's report, but received me with a very gra-

cious air, and gave me the answer we desired. We went immediately to the castle, whither our own mules with a slow pace dragged our coach. At the gate we met Don Pedro's widow, who came out to receive my mistress. I shall pass over the compliments they made each other on this occasion, and only observe, that Elvira was a lady pretty well advanced in years, but very polite, and knew how to do the devoirs of hospitality as well as ever a woman in the world. She conducted Aurora into a sumptuous apartment, where leaving her to take a little repose, she came and employed her attention on the most minute things that concerned us. Afterwards when supper was ready, she ordered the cloth to be laid in Aurora's chamber, where they both sat down together at table. Don Pedro's widow was not one of those who think they perform the honours of a table to admiration in assuming a grave and pensive air; she was of a gay disposition, and her conversation very sprightly and agreeable, expressing herself genteelly and elegantly. I could not help admiring her wit, and the delicate turn of her thoughts, which seemed to charm Aurora not less than myself. They conceived a friendship for each other and made a reciprocal promise to hold a correspondence by letters. Our coach could not be refitted till the following day, and as we should run some hazard by setting out late, it was agreed we should stay at the castle till the day after. We the servants were in our turn served with a profusion of victuals, and our beds were not worse than our supper.

My mistress discovered new charms next day in Elvira's conversation, who dined with her in a large hall adorned with several fine pieces of painting, one of which was drawn in a very masterly manner, but it presented a most tragical scene to the view. A dead

cavalier appeared lying on his back, all weltering in his blood, but seemed still to retain a haughty menacing air, even in death. Near him was a young lady in another attitude, stretched also upon the ground; a sword was seen plunged in her bosom, and she was just giving up the ghost, fixing her dying eyes upon a young man, who seemed to be stung to the heart with grief for the loss of her. The painter had also brought into his piece another figure, which did not pass unobserved; this was an old man of a good mien, who looked at the bloody scene that lay before him with as much concern as the youth. One would have thought that these dreadful images struck them both with the same sorrow, but that each received the impression in a different manner. The old man was immersed in a profound affliction, and seemed as if he were quite overwhelmed with it, but there was a sort of fury mixed with the grief of the young man. The painter had expressed the whole with such boldness, that we could have admired it for ever. Aurora asked what story the picture represented. Madam, replied Elvira, it is a true description of the misfortunes of my family. This answer excited my mistress's curiosity, and she expressed such an eager desire to be farther informed, that Don Pedro's widow could not help satisfying her. This promise, which was made in the presence of Dame Ortiz, her two companions, and myself, kept us all four in the hall after dinner was ended. My mistress would have set us out of the room, but Elvira seeing that we were desirous of hearing an explanation of the picture, was so kind as to bid us stay, telling us that the story she was going to relate did not in the least require secrecy: she therefore not long after thus began.



CHAP. IV.

The Marriage out of Revenge.

A NOVEL.

ROGER King of Sicily had a brother and a sister. Mainfroy (for so his brother was called,) rebelled against him, and kindled a bloody war in the kingdom; but he had the misfortune to be defeated in two battles, and to fall into the king's hands, who contented himself with punishing his rebellion by depriving him of his liberty. This clemency only got Roger the name of a barbarous tyrant among one part of his subjects, who said he would have killed his brother, had it not been for the pleasure he expected to have in torturing him with a more slow and inhuman revenge. But all the rest, with more grounds, imputed the harsh treatment he suffered in prison to his sister Mathilda. That princess had indeed always hated the prince, and constantly persecuted him as long as he lived: but she died soon after, and her death was looked upon as a just punishment for her barbarity.

The Prince leaving two infant sons behind him, Roger wished to get rid of them; lest when they were arrived at years of maturity, the desire of revenging their father should excite them to revive a faction, which was not so utterly depressed, but that it might occasion the state new troubles. He told his prime minister, Leontio Siffredi, of his design, who, to dissuade him from it, did himself undertake the education of the eldest, called Prince Henriquez, and advised him to trust the youngest, Don Pedro, to the care of

the constable of Sicily. The king, persuaded that his nephews would be brought up by these men in that submission and duty which they owed him, intrusted them to their care, and took upon himself the guardianship of his niece Constantia, of the same age as Henriquez, and only daughter of the princess Mathilda. He allowed her women to attend her, and masters to instruct her, sparing nothing to render her accomplished and amiable.

At Belmont, two short leagues from Palermo, stood the castle of Leontio Siffredi; and there that minister employed himself in rendering Henriquez worthy of one day reigning in Sicily. He soon observed such amiable qualities in that Prince, that he applied as closely to the cultivation of them, as if he himself had had no children. Yet he was blessed with two daughters; the eldest, called Blanch, who was younger by a year than prince Henriquez, was perfectly beautiful; the other, named Portia, whose birth occasioned the death of her mother, was yet but in the cradle. Siffredi's eldest daughter and the young prince, as soon as they were capable of love, entertained a mutual passion, tho' they were not permitted to converse together in private. Henriquez, however, did not fail to find opportunities sometimes, and knew so well how to make the best of these precious moments, that he prevailed upon Blanch to allow him to execute a project he had formed. Just about this time it happened that Leontio was sent by the King into one of the most remote provinces of the island. During his absence Henriquez had an opening made in the wall of his apartment, that was contiguous to Blanch's chamber, supplying it with a sliding partition of wood, so that no eye could discover the artifice. A very able archi-

rect, whom the Prince had made his friend, did the work with the utmost secrecy and expedition.

The amorous Henriquez got often into his mistress's chamber by means of this passage, but he did not abuse his goodness; for though she was so imprudent as to allow him the private entrance into her apartment, she did it however upon the assurance that he would never ask any thing her innocence could not grant. One night he found her very uneasy. She had heard that the King was extremely ill, and had sent for her father, as high-chancellor of the kingdom, to intrust him with his last will. She already represented to herself her dear Henriquez upon the throne, and fearing she should be bereft of him when in so exalted a station, was under the utmost anxiety; and when he appeared, her eyes were drowned in tears. Good Gods! Madam, what is the matter? Wherefore do you weep? said he to her. My Lord, said Blanch, I cannot conceal my alarms; the King your uncle will soon be no more, and you are to succeed him. When I consider how far your new greatness will set you above me, I own it gives me some uneasiness. A monarch sees things with other eyes than a lover, and that which was his utmost ambition, when he was a subject, affects him but slightly, when on a throne. Whether it be an unhappy presage, or reason only, that inspires me, I feel my soul agitated with emotions that all my confidence in your goodness cannot assuage; and though I dare not doubt your generosity, I cannot help distrusting my own destiny. Adorable Blanch, answered Henriquez, your fears are very obliging, and justify the love I bear you: but the excess of your doubts injures my love, and if I may be so bold as to say it, even the esteem you owe me. No, no, think not that my destiny and yours can ever be

separated. Believe rather that you shall for ever be my only joy and happiness. Lay aside your fear therefore, and let it not disturb such gentle moments. Ah! my Lord, answered Blanch, as soon as you are crowned, your subjects will perhaps demand for your queen a princess descended from a long race of kings, whose splendid nuptials may add new kingdoms to your own; and perhaps, alas! you will answer their expectations, even at the expence of your own desires. Why do you torment yourself so, replied the Prince with some warmth, by looking into futurity for an afflicting thought? Should Heaven take back the king my uncle to itself, and make me master of Sicily, I here swear to you that I will give you my hand in Palmero in presence of my whole court, and I invoke whatever is held most sacred to be witness of my oath.

These protestations of Henriquez made Blanch cheer up, and the rest of their discourse was about King Roger's illness. The Prince in this shewed the goodness of his heart. He bewailed his uncle's fate, though he had so little cause to be sorry at it, and the force of blood made him bewail a prince, by whose death he should acquire a crown. But Blanch did not yet know all the misfortunes that threatened her. The Constable of Sicily having met her coming out of Siffredi's apartment one day when he was at the castle about some important affairs, was captivated with her beauty, and next day asked her in marriage of her father, who gave his consent; but the king's distemper intervening, the marriage was deferred, and Blanch was ignorant of every thing that had been done with regard to her.

One morning, just as Henriquez had done dressing, he was amazed to see Siffredi, followed by Blanch, enter his chamber. My Lord, said Leontio, the news

I bring will I believe afflict you, but the consolation with which they are attended ought to moderate your grief. The King your uncle is no more; but his death has rendered you sovereign of his kingdom. The grandees of Sicily, who wait your commands at Palermo, have commissioned me to receive them from your own mouth; and I am come, my Lord, with my daughter, to offer you the earliest and most sincere homage which is due from your new subjects. Henriquez, who knew that Roger had for about two months laboured under a fit of illness which gradually consumed him, was not at all surprized at this intelligence. Nevertheless, being struck with the sudden change of his condition, he found a thousand confused emotions rising within his breast. Having remained some time thoughtful, he broke silence, and thus addressed Leontio: Sage Siffredi, I have always regarded you as my father. It shall be my glory to conduct myself by your counsel, and you shall in effect be King of Sicily more than myself. Thus saying, he went to a table, upon which was a standish, and taking a sheet of paper, wrote his name at the bottom. My Lord, what do you mean by that? said Siffredi. To give you a proof of my esteem and gratitude, replied Henriquez, giving the paper to Blanch, and saying, Receive, Madam, this pledge of my faith, and of the empire over my inclinations which I now yield to you. Blanch took it with a blush, and made the Prince this answer: My Lord, I receive with respect the favours of my King, but I depend upon a father, and therefore hope your Majesty will allow me to deposite this paper in his hands, that he may make what use of it he thinks proper.

Thus saying, she gave the subscription of Henriquez to her father, who then observed what till that moment had escaped his penetration. He found how

the Prince's sentiments lay, and therefore said to him, Your Majesty shall have no cause to blame me, I will not abuse the confidence you—My dear Siffredi, interrupted Henriquez, you can never abuse it. Whatever use you shall make of that paper, I shall approve of it. But go, added he, return to Palermo, order the preparations to be made for my coronation, and tell my subjects that I will follow you immediately, to receive their oaths of allegiance, and assure them of my affection. The minister obeyed the orders of his new master, and departed with Blanch for Palermo.

Not long after the Prince too left Belmont, his thoughts more engrossed by his love than by the throne of which he was going to take possession. Upon his entry into the city, he was saluted with universal shouts of joy, and amidst the acclamations of the people entered the palace, where every thing was ready prepared for the ceremony. He there found the Princess Constantia in deep mourning, and, to all appearance, very much grieved for the late King's death. As they owed each other a reciprocal compliment of condolence upon the event, they both acquitted themselves of it very genteelly, but with a little more coldness on the side of Henriquez than on that of Constantia, who, notwithstanding the enmity subsisting between their families, could not hate the Prince. He placed himself on the throne, and the Princess sat on his right hand in an elbow chair not quite so high. The grandees of the kingdom took their places each according to his rank. The ceremony began, and Siffredi, as high-chancellor and keeper of the late king's will, opened and read it through with an audible voice. The substance of this deed was, That Roger seeing himself without issue, named the eldest son of Main-

froy for his successor, on condition that he married Constantia, which if he refused to perform, he should be set aside, and the infant Don Pedro should ascend the throne upon the same conditions.

These words very much surprized Henriquez; the restriction gave him incredible uneasiness, which became still more violent, when Leontio, after having read the will, said aloud to the whole assembly, My Lords, having informed our new monarch of the late worthy King's pleasure, this generous Prince consents to honour his cousin the Princess Constantia with his hand. At these words Henriquez interrupted the chancellor, saying, Leontio, the writing which Blanch——My Lord, replied Siffredi with precipitation, preventing the King from proceeding, here it is. The grandees of the realm, added he, shewing the note to the whole assembly, will here see, by your Majesty's august signature, the esteem you have for the Princess, and the deference you pay to the last will of the deceased King your uncle. Upon which he read over the deed with which he himself had filled the paper, containing the most solemn engagement to marry Constantia, conformable to Roger's intention. The hall resounded with shouts of joy, all the people crying, Longlive our noble King Henriquez. As no body was ignorant of the aversion which the Prince had always shewn for the Princess, it was feared, not without reason, that he would oppose the condition of the will, and so raise commotions in the nation. But the reading of this paper quite dispelled all fears from the minds of the nobles and people, and caused those general acclamations, which, in secret, very much tormented the king.

Constantia, who, both on account of her glory and love, was more concerned in this joy than any body else,

chose this time to assure Henriquez of her gratitude: But he, notwithstanding his utmost efforts, could not help receiving her compliment with uneasiness, and was in such disorder, that he could not so much as answer. No longer able to conceal his passion, he drew near to Siffredi, whom the duty of his office obliged to be pretty near his person, and said to him in a low voice, What have you done, Leontio? It was not for this purpose that I gave the subscription to your daughter. You betray—Consider your own glory, Sir, interrupted Siffredi in a resolute tone; you lose the crown of Sicily, if you refuse to obey the will of the King your uncle. After speaking thus, he went away farther from Henriquez, to avoid a reply. The king remained in the utmost perplexity, and felt himself racked with a thousand contrary emotions. He was enraged at Leontio; he could not resolve to abandon Blanch; but, divided between his honour and his love, he stood some time in suspense what resolution to pursue. However, at last he came to a final determination, and thought he had found a way to preserve Siffredi's daughter, without renouncing the throne. He feigned submission to Roger's will, intending, whilst a dispensation for his marriage with his cousin should be soliciting at Rome, to win over the nobles of the realm by his bounty, and establish his power so strongly, as to be in a condition absolutely to refuse to fulfil the conditions that were imposed upon him.

No sooner had this design come into his head, than he became more serene, and turning to Constantia, confirmed what the high-chancellor had read before the whole assembly. But in the very moment when he betrayed his own thoughts so far as to plight his troth to her, Blanch entered the hall, She came

thither, by her father's command, to pay her respects to the Princess, and the first thing that struck her ears was Henriquez's tongue promising Constantia his hand. Besides, Leontio, that she might not doubt her misfortune, said, while he presented her to Constantia, Daughter, pay homage to your Queen. With her all the delights of a flourishing reign and a happy marriage. The unhappy Blanch was unable to bear this dreadful stroke; in vain she endeavoured to hide her concern. She blushed and grew pale alternately, and her whole body trembled. Nevertheless, the Princess did not suspect any thing. She attributed the disorder in which she paid her compliments to the perplexity of a young person educated in a desert, and unhackneyed in the ways of a court. It was not so with Henriquez. The sight of Blanch abashed him; and the despair which he saw in her eyes put him beside himself. He did not doubt, that, judging by appearances, she concluded him faithless. He would have been less uneasy, could he have found an opportunity to speak to her; but how could he do that, when all Sicily had their eyes fixed upon him? Besides, the hard-hearted Leontio deprived him of that hope; for reading the thoughts of these two lovers in their looks, and desirous to prevent the mischiefs which the violence of their passion might create in the state, he had the cunning to take his daughter out of the assembly, and carry her with him to Belmont, in a resolution, for more reasons than one, to have her married as soon as possible.

As soon as they arrived, he acquainted her with all the horror of her fate, by declaring, that he had promised her to the Constable. Good Gods! cried Blanch in a transport of grief, which her father's presence could not repress, to what unknown misery do

you reserve the unhappy Blanch! So violent was her transport, that all the faculties of her soul were suspended. She was seized with an universal chiliness, and becoming as pale as death, she dropped down in a swoon in her father's arms. He was moved with her condition; yet, though he shared her affliction with all the affection of a parent, he stuck firm to his first resolution. Blanch at length recovered her spirits, more by means of the poignancy of her grief, than by the water which Siffredi sprinkled on her face; and perceiving, while she opened her eyes in a languishing manner, his care to assist her, My Lord, said she, with a feeble voice, interrupted with sighs, I am ashamed that you have seen my weakness; but death, which must soon put a final period to my woes, will deliver you of an unhappy daughter, who has dared to dispose of her heart without your consent. No, my dear Blanch, replied Leontio, there is no fear of your dying; virtue will again reassume her empire in your breast. The Constable's alliance is an honour to you; he is the most considerable match in the kingdom.—I esteem his person and his merit, interrupted Blanch; but the King had given me hopes——Daughter, said Siffredi, cutting her short in his turn, I know as much of that matter as you can tell me. I am not ignorant of your tenderness for that prince, nor should I disapprove of it in other conjunctures. You should even see me eager to procure you Henriquez for a husband, if the interest of his glory, and that of the nation, did not oblige him to marry Constantia. It is on that condition only, that the late king designed him for his successor; and would you have him prefer you to the crown of Sicily? Believe me, I sympathize with you in the cruel stroke you suffer: but since there is no resisting our destiny, I would have

you make one generous effort. What a stain would it be to your glory, to let the whole kingdom know the vain hope with which you flattered yourself! Your passion for the King may raise reports to your disadvantage; and the only way to hinder it, is to marry the Constable. In short, Blanch, this is no time to deliberate. The King gives you up for a throne, and marries Constantia. The Constable has my promise, which I beg you will perform; and if I must use my authority to bring you to this resolution, I command you to do it.

Thus saying, he left her to reflect upon what he had said, hoping, that after she had maturely considered the arguments he had made use of to help her virtue to get the better of her passion, she would of herself resolve to give her hand to the Constable. In this he was not deceived: but what pangs did it cost the unhappy Blanch before she came to that resolution! She was in a condition that would have affected the hardest heart. Grief for seeing her fears of Henriquez's infidelity turned into certainty, and for being constrained, in losing him, to give herself away to another, whom she could not love, caused in her heart such violent transports of grief, that every moment was attended with new torments. If my misery is certain, cried she, how can I resist it without dying? Cruel destiny! why was I fed with such soothing hopes, when I was doomed to such an abyss of misery! And thou, perfidious lover! how dar'st thou give thy hand to another, when thou hadst promised me eternal fidelity? Hast thou so soon forgot the faith which thou hadst sworn to me? But, as a punishment for thy having so cruelly deceived me, grant, heaven, that the conjugal bed which thou art about to stain with thy treachery may give thee nothing but remorse in-

stead of pleasure! May the embraces of Constantia convey poison to thy false heart! And may thy marriage become as horrible as mine! Yes, traitor! I will marry the Constable, whom I cannot love, to be revenged upon myself, and punish me for having chosen thee for the object of my foolish love. Since my religion forbids me to lay violent hands upon myself, the remainder of my days shall be but one unhappy series of misery and woe. If thou still preservest any tenderness for me, thou wilt be mortified at seeing me throw myself into the arms of another; and if thou hast quite forgot me, Sicily may at least boast that she has produced one woman, who punished herself for having too carelessly disposed of her heart.

In this manner did this unhappy victim of love and duty spend the night that preceded her marriage with the Constable. Siffredi finding her next day resolved to obey his commands, made haste to take the advantage of that favourable disposition. He sent for the Constable to Belmont that very day, and married him privately to his daughter, in the chapel of the castle. What a day was this to Blanch! She was not only obliged to renounce a crown, to lose, for ever, a person whom she loved, and bestow herself upon the object of her hatred, but also to dissemble her sentiments before a husband who was naturally jealous, and who was passionately fond of her. The Constable, delighted with the possession of what he held most dear, was continually in her company, and did not so much as give her the sad consolation of bewailing her misfortunes in secret. At the approach of night, Blanch felt her affliction redoubled: but what were her pangs when her women, having undressed her, left her alone with the Constable! He kindly asked her what was the cause of that sorrow with which she seemed to be

depressed? Leontio's daughter, perplexed by this question, feigned herself indisposed. The Constable at first believed her, but he soon had other thoughts: for, as he was really concerned at the condition in which he saw her, and pressed her to go to bed, his intreaties, which she misinterpreted, presented to her mind such a distracting image, that, not being able to contain herself any longer, she gave free vent to her sighs and tears. What a sight was this for a man who imagined himself at the very summit of his wishes! He no longer doubted but his wife's affliction concealed some fatal secret. Nevertheless, though his thoughts reduced him almost to as deplorable a situation as that of Blanch, he had such command of himself, that he concealed his suspicions. He redoubled his assiduities, and pressed her more and more to go to bed, assuring her, that he would not interrupt the repose which she seemed so much to want. He even offered to call her women to her, if she thought that their assistance would alleviate her illness. Blanch, encouraged by this promise, told him, that her present weakness only required a little sleep. He pretended to believe her. They both went to bed together, and spent the night very differently from what two lovers that are joined in affection, as well as marriage, are wont to do.

While Blanch indulged her grief, the Constable was studying what could be the cause of his marriage being rendered so unhappy. He easily concluded, that he had a rival; but was bewildered in his own imagination, when he endeavoured to guess who it should be; and the sole result of his conjectures was, that he was of all mankind the most miserable. He spent two-thirds of the night in these agitations, when his ears were struck with a hollow noise; and

he was not a little surpris'd to hear somebody tread slowly along the room. He believed himself mistaken; for he remembered that he himself had locked the door, after his wife's women were gone. He drew the curtain, that his eyes might be witness of the cause of the noise he heard; but the light, which had been left in the chimney, was gone out. In a little time, he heard the name of Blanch repeated several times, in a feeble and languishing tone. Then his jealous suspicions were inflamed to fury; and his honour obliging him to rise, in order to prevent an injury, or be revenged for it, he took his sword, and moved towards that side whence the voice seemed to come. He found a naked sword clash with his own. He advanced; the other retired; he pursued, and the other vanished from his pursuit. In vain did he search for him, who seemed to fly, in every corner of the room, as well as he could in the dark; but he could not find him. He stood still: he listened a while, but could hear nothing. What an enchantment was here! He went to the door, which he imagined had favoured the flight of the secret enemy of his honour, but he found it fast locked as before. Not knowing what to make of all this, he called some of his servants who lay nearest him, and as he opened the door for that purpose, he stood in the midst of it upon his guard, for fear the person he sought for should escape him. Some of the servants hearing his repeated cries, came running with candles in their hands; upon which he took a light, and made a new search in the chamber, sword in hand; but he could find nobody, nor the least mark of any person's having been there. He did not even perceive the private door, nor the opening thro' which there was a passage. Yet he was well assured, that his ears had not been deceiv-

ed. He still remained in a strange confusion of thoughts. To have recourse to Blanch, would have been in vain, she was too much concerned in the truth for him to expect an explanation from her. He therefore chose rather to go and open his heart to Leontio, after having sent away his servants, telling them that he thought he had heard a noise in the chamber, but found he was deceived. He met his father-in-law coming out of his apartment at the bustle he had heard, and recounted to him what had happened, with all the grief and disorder that can be imagined.

Siffredi was amazed at what he heard, which, though he did not think such an accident natural, he, nevertheless, believed; and judging the King's love to be capable of any thing, he was very uneasy at it. But, far from flattering the jealous suspicions of his son-in-law, he represented to him, with an air of assurance, that the voice he imagined he had heard, and the sword that was opposed to his, could be nothing but the phantoms of an imagination disturbed by jealousy; for it was impossible any body should have been in his daughter's chamber; that with regard to the melancholy which he had observed in his wife, it might be caused by some little indisposition; that change of condition to one who had always lived a retired life, and sees herself on a sudden delivered to a man whom she had not had time to know, and to love, might be the cause of these tears, sighs, and that affliction, of which he complained: that love was not to be kindled in the heart of maidens of a noble birth by any other means than time and assiduity; that he would have him calm his uneasiness, and redouble his tenderness and care, in order to make Blanch become more sensible of his merit; and intreated him there-

fore to return to her, and believe that his uneasiness and suspicion were injuries done to his wife's virtue.

The Constable made no reply to these remonstrances; and either did indeed begin to imagine, that he might have been imposed upon by the disorder of his mind, or else thought it better to dissemble, than vainly to endeavour to convince the old man of an event so void of all probability. He returned to his wife's apartment, lay down again by her, and tried to obtain, by sleep, some respite from his cares. Blanch, on her side, was not less uneasy than he: she had but too plainly heard that which alarmed her husband, and could not ascribe to her imagination an adventure, the secret and motives of which she knew. She was surprised that Henriquez should come into her apartment, after having so solemnly pledged his faith to Constantia. Instead of being pleased with this attempt, or receiving any satisfaction from it, she looked upon it as a new affront, and was greatly enraged at him.

Whilst Siffredi's daughter was prejudiced against the young King, and believed him the most unfaithful of men, that unhappy prince, more entangled in her charms than ever, was impatient to speak with her, in order to encourage her against the appearances that condemned him. He would have come sooner to Belmont for this purpose, if his affairs would have permitted him; but he could not steal away from court till that night. He too well knew every corner of the place in which he had been brought up, to be under any difficulty of getting unseen into Siffredi's castle; besides, he had still the key of the back-door that led into the garden, through which he got into his old apartment, and so into Blanch's chamber. You may imagine the astonishment of the Prince when he found a man there, and felt a sword clash with his. He had

much ado to contain himself from punishing on the spot the audacious wretch who durst lift his sacrilegious hand against his king; but the respect he owed to Leontio's daughter suspended his resentment. He retired the same way he had entered, and more afflicted than ever, took the road to Palermo. He arrived there some moments before day, and shut himself up in his apartment. But the agitation of his spirits depriving him of rest, he resolved to return once more to Belmont; his safety, his honour, and, above all, his love, not suffering him to remain longer ignorant of the least circumstances of such an unhappy accident.

As soon as it was day, he commanded his hunting equipage to be got ready, and under pretence of taking that diversion, rode far into Belmont forest, attended by his huntsmen, and some courtiers. For some time he followed the sport close, the better to conceal his design; and when he saw every one eagerly engaged at the heels of the hounds, he turned aside by himself and rode to the castle of Belmont with such speed and impatience, that he in a little time over-run the distance that separated him from the person he adored. He was studying some plausible pretext to speak with Siffredi's daughter in private, when, crossing a small narrow road that led to one of the park-gates, he perceived hard by two women, in discourse with each other, at the foot of a tree. Not doubting but these persons belonged to the castle, the sight of them raised within him some emotion: but he was in a much greater disorder when, the women turning towards him at the noise of a horse's tread, he beheld his beloved Blanch. She had escaped from the castle with Nisa, one of her women, in whom she placed the greatest confidence, and came thither to have the freedom of bewailing her misfortunes.

He immediately run and threw himself at her feet, and perceiving in her eyes all the marks of great affliction, was very much affected. Amiable Blanch, said he, suspend the emotions of your grief till you have heard what I have to say. I confess, appearances represent me guilty to your eyes; but when you know the design I have formed for your sake, that which you now look upon as a crime, will appear to be a proof of my innocence and excess of love. These words, which Henriquez thought were sufficient to moderate, served only to redouble Blanch's affliction, who would have answered him, had not her uninterrupted sobs stopped up the organs of her voice. The Prince, surprized at this excess of grief, said, What, madam, cannot I then calm your disquiet? What have I done to forfeit your confidence? I, who hazard my crown, and even my life, to keep myself yours! At length Leontio's daughter, with the utmost difficulty, replied, Sir, your promises are now unseasonable; nothing henceforth can bind my destiny to yours. Ah, Blanch! cried Henriquez, what do I hear? Who dares ravish you from my love? Who dares stand up against the fury of a king, who would rather set all Sicily in a flame, than suffer you to be torn from his hopes? Your whole power, Sir, replied Siffredi's daughter in a languishing voice, is not able to remove the obstacles that separate us.—I am the Constable's wife. The Constable's wife! cried the Prince, staggering backwards. He was so struck with these words, that he could say no more. His strength forsook him, and he dropped down at the foot of a tree that was behind him. He trembled, and turned pale, and had no faculty at liberty but his eyes, which he fixed upon Blanch, in such a manner, as gave her to understand how deeply he was affected with this irreparable misfortune. She

on the other hand, looked upon him with an aspect that sufficiently informed him her trouble was very little short of his; and these two unhappy lovers preserved, between them a silence that had something in it very dreadful. At length the Prince, with much ado, recollecting himself a little, cried out with a sigh, Ah, what have you done, Blanch? Your credulity has undone me, and yourself too.

Blanch, piqued at the Prince's seeming to throw the blame upon her, when she thought she had much more reason to complain of him, replied, What, Sir, do you add dissimulation to your infidelity? Would you have me discredit my own eyes and ears, and believe you innocent, in spite of their evidence? No, Sir, I own myself incapable of so great a conquest over my reason.—Yet, madam, answered the King, those evidences which you think so certain have imposed upon you: even they have assisted in betraying you; and it is no less true, that I am innocent and constant, than that you are the Constable's wife. How, Sir, replied she, did not I hear you confirm the promise of your hand to Constantia? Have you not assured the grandees of the kingdom, that you would obey the conditions of the late King's will? And did not the Princess receive the homage of your new subjects, in quality of your spouse and their queen? Now, were my eyes deceived? Say, say rather, faithless prince! that you did not think Blanch fit to ballance in your heart the interest of a throne; and without debasing yourself so far, as to pretend to a passion that you no longer feel, and perhaps never felt, confess that you thought the Sicilian crown more secure with Constantia, than with Leontio's daughter. You are in the right, Sir: I no more deserved a crown, than I did the heart of so great a prince as you. I was too

vain to pretend to either; but you ought not to have indulged me in my error. You know the alarms I had of your ruin, which seemed to me almost inevitable. Why did you encourage me with hope? Why was you so cruel as to dissipate my fears? I should have accused fate, not you; and you would have, at least, preserved my heart, and hindered me from disposing of my hand, which no other should ever have obtained of me. It is now too late to justify yourself: I am the Constable's wife: and since this conversation with another man may be a blot on my honour, allow me, Sir, without failing in that respect which I owe you, to withdraw from one whom I am not any longer at liberty to hear.

Thus saying, she fled from Henriquez, with all the haste her present weak condition would allow. Stop, madam, cried he, and afflict not thus a prince, who would rather overturn that throne which you upbraid him for having preferred to your love, than fulfil his new subjects' expectation. That sacrifice, said Blanch, is at present vain. While I am the Constable's wife, these generous transports will not avail. Since I am no longer mistress of myself, it is of small importance to me now what disorders you create in Sicily, or to whom you give your hand. If I have been so weak as to suffer my heart to be surprized, I shall at least have fortitude enough to stifle its emotions, and to shew the new King of Sicily, that the Constable's wife is no longer Prince Henriquez's lover. So saying, being close at the park-gate, she entered it suddenly with Nisa, and locking it on the other side, left the Prince overwhelmed with sorrow. He could not overcome the blow which Blanch had given him by the news of her marriage. Perfidious woman! cried he, you have lost all remembrance of our mutual en-

gement. Notwithstanding our reciprocal vows, we are parted for ever. The idea I had formed of possessing your charms was then but a vain illusion: Ah, cruel Blanch! how dearly did I buy your approbation of my flame!

Then the image of his rival's happiness presented itself to his mind, with all the horrors of jealousy; which baleful passion took such full possession of his soul, that he was ready to sacrifice to his fury the Constable, and even Siffredi himself. Reason, however, by degrees, allayed the violence of these transports. Yet the impossibility he had perceived of convincing Blanch of his fidelity, almost drove him to despair. He flattered himself with the hopes of effacing those evil impressions, if he could but converse with her at liberty: for which purpose, he judged it necessary to remove the Constable, and therefore resolved to have him seized, as a person suspected of designs against the state. He accordingly gave orders about it to the captain of his guard, who repairing immediately to Belmont, took him into custody about evening, and brought him to the castle of Palermo.

This incident filled all Belmont with consternation. Siffredi went away that moment, to be security to the King for his son-in-law's innocence, and to represent the troublesome consequences of such an arrest. The King, who expected this step of his minister, and who was determined, at all events, to have a free interview with Blanch, before the Constable should be released, had expressly commanded that nobody should be admitted to him till next morning. But Leontio, notwithstanding this order, managed it so well, as to get into his presence. Sir, said he the moment that he entered, if a loyal and respectful subject may be allowed to complain of his master, I am come to complain

of you to yourself. What crime has my son-in-law been guilty of? Has your majesty duly reflected on the eternal reproach you have fixed upon my family, and on the consequences of an action, which may alienate from your interests the hearts of those who enjoy the most important posts in your kingdom! I have certain intelligence, answered the King, that the Constable holds a criminal correspondence with the infant Don Pedro. Criminal correspondence! cried Leontio, with surprize; ah, Sir, do not believe it: treason never entered the family of the Siffredi; and the Constable's being my son-in-law, is enough to screen him from this suspicion. The Constable is innocent; but some private views have induced you to imprison him.

Since you speak so freely to me, said the King, I will do the same to you. You condemn me for your son in-law's imprisonment; but have I not far greater reason to complain of your cruelty? It is you, hard-hearted Siffredi, who have robbed me of my quiet, and reduced me to a condition more miserable than the meanest of mortals. But do not flatter yourself, that I will enter into your schemes. My marriage with Constantia is resolved upon in vain. How! Sir, interrupted Leontio, can you refuse to marry the Princess, after having made her so solemn a promise, in the face of all your people? If I deceive their expectation, replied the King, ascribe it entirely to yourself. Why did you lay me under a necessity of promising that which I could not perform? Who told you to fill the paper which I gave your daughter with the name of Constantia? You were very sensible of my intention. You tyrannized over the heart of Blanch, in forcing her to marry a man she could not love. And what right had you over mine, to dispose of it to a

Princess I abhor? Have you forgot that she is the daughter of that cruel Mathilda, who, trampling under her feet all the ties of blood and humanity, was the cause of my father's ending his days in a rigorous captivity? And shall I marry her? No, Siffredi, lay aside those hopes. Before Hymen lights his torch for such a match, you will see all Sicily in flames, and its ashes quenched in blood.

Do not my ears deceive me? cried Leontio. Ah, Sir, what a prospect have you set before my eyes! What terrible threats! But I am alarmed in vain, continued he in another tone: you love your subjects too well, to bring such miseries upon them. You will not allow yourself to be overcome by this foolish passion. You will not tarnish your virtues with the weaknesses of ordinary men. If I gave my daughter to the Constable, it was to gain to your Majesty's interests a valiant subject, who by his bravery and power in the army might defend your cause against Don Pedro. I thought that in attaching him to my family, by such intimate ties—These are the ties, cried the King, these are the ties that have ruined me! Cruel friend! why did you give me so incurable a wound? Did you imagine I should be obliged to you for strengthening my power, at the expence of every thing that is dear to me? Why did you not leave me to support my rights by myself? Have I not courage enough to quell those who rise up against me? The Constable himself should have found I had, if he had disobeyed me. I know that kings ought not to be tyrants, and that the happiness of their people should be their chief aim; but are they, therefore, to be their subjects' slaves? And when Heaven has once made choice of them to govern, do they forfeit the right which every man has, of disposing of their own affections? If they

have not power to enjoy them, as the lowest class of mortals have, take back, Siffredi, that sovereign power which you were so fond of securing, at the expence of my repose.

You know, Sir, replied Siffredi, that your marriage with Constantia was, by the late King, made the condition of your succeeding to the crown. And what right, answered Henriquez, had he to establish that disposition? Did he receive the succession from his brother King Charles upon the same unworthy conditions? And how came you to be so weak as to agree to such a piece of injustice? For an high-chancellor, methinks you are ill acquainted with our constitution. In short, though I have promised my hand to Constantia, it was not a voluntary engagement, therefore I am determined not to keep my word. If Don Pedro, upon this refusal, endeavours to pull me from my throne, our swords alone, without engaging the people in our quarrel, may decide the conquest, and shew which is most worthy to reign. Leontio, not daring to urge him any further, contented himself with begging, upon his knees, his son-in-law's liberty, which he obtained. Go, said the King, return to Belmont, whither the Constable shall follow you presently. The minister returned immediately to Belmont, persuaded that his son-in-law would be there almost as soon as himself; but he was mistaken. Henriquez resolved to have an interview with Blanch that night, and therefore deferred setting the Constable at liberty till the following morning.

The Constable all this while was tortured with the most melancholy reflexions. His imprisonment plainly discovered to him the cause of his marriage being so unfortunate. He therefore abandoned himself entirely to his jealousy; and, contrary to his well-known

loyalty, breathed forth nothing by vengeance. As he imagined that the King would not fail to be with Blanch that night, in order to surprize them together, he begged the governor of the castle to let him out of prison, upon an affair of the utmost importance, assuring him that he would deliver himself up again into his hands the next morning before it was light. The governor, who was entirely devoted to him, consented the more readily, because he knew that Siffredi had already obtained his liberty; and, to add to the obligation, even furnished him with a horse to carry him to Belmont. The Constable being arrived there, he tied his horse to a tree, entered the park by a little door, of which he had the key, and was so lucky as to get into the castle unperceived. He went straight to his wife's apartment, and concealing himself in the anti-chamber, behind a screen that stood there, proposed to observe from thence all that should pass, and repair suddenly to Blanch's chamber, at the least noise he should hear.

Leontio's daughter, who immediately discerned the reason of her husband's imprisonment, concluded that he would hardly return that night to Belmont, altho' her father had told her that the King had assured him the Constable would set out soon after him. She did not doubt but Henriquez would make use of such an opportunity to visit and converse with her in private: and in this opinion she waited for the Prince, to reproach him for an action which might have terrible consequences, with regard to her. Accordingly, soon after Nisa was gone, the partition opened, and the King threw himself at Blanch's feet, saying, Madam, do not condemn before you have given me the hearing. If I imprisoned the Constable, consider that it was the only means I had left to justify myself; there-

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fore impute that artifice to yourself alone. Why did you, this morning, refuse to hear me? Alas! to-morrow your husband will be at liberty, and I shall never have an opportunity of speaking to you again. Hear me, therefore, this last time. Since the loss of you makes me the most wretched of men, grant me at least the melancholy consolation of informing you, that my infidelity is not the cause of my misfortune: for tho' I made Constantia a promise of my hand, it was because I could not possibly dispense with doing it, in the situation to which your father had reduced me. I was obliged to deceive the Princess, for your interest as well as my own, in order to secure to you the crown as well as the person of your lover. I flattered myself so far as to imagine I should succeed in my design. I had already concerted measures to break this engagement; but you have destroyed my plan, and, by giving yourself away too inconsiderately, have prepared irreparable misery for two hearts, which might otherwise have enjoyed the most inviolable love.

Blanch was affected at these words, he at the same time shewing such unfeigned marks of the deepest despair. She now no longer doubted his innocence, which at first gave her some joy; but afterwards it made the sense of her misfortunes more intolerable than ever. Ah, Sir! said she to the King, after the cruel determination of our fate, the finding you guiltless increases my affliction. Wretch that I am, what have I done? My resentment has ruined me! I thought myself abandoned, and in revenge accepted of the Constable, whom my father presented to me. It is I that am criminal; it is I that have been the cause of our mutual misery! Alas! while I accused you of having deceived me, it was I, too credulous fool! that broke all the ties which I had sworn should be eter-

nal. Revenge yourself, Sir, in your turn; hate, hate the ungrateful Blanch:—forget her. Ah, Madam, interrupted Henriquez mournfully, how shall I find means to tear from my heart a passion, which even your injustice could not extinguish? You must however, Sir, make that effort, replied Siffredi's daughter sighing. What! are you yourself capable of that effort? said the King. I am not certain I shall quite conquer my affection, replied she, but I will spare no pains in the endeavour. Ah, cruel Blanch, said the King, you will easily forget Henriquez, since you are able to form such a design. What opinion do you then entertain of me? replied Blanch in a more resolute tone. Do you flatter yourself that I will allow you to continue your addresses? No, Sir, these hopes are vain. Though I was not born to be a queen, Heaven never created me to give ear to a dishonourable passion. My husband is, as well as you, Sir, of the noble family of Anjou; and if my duty did not raise an insurmountable obstacle to your gallantry, my honour would oblige me to reject it. I conjure you therefore to retire. I must see you no more. Ah, Blanch, cried the King, is it possible that you can be so cruel to me? Did you imagine the seeing you the Constable's wife too little to overwhelm me, that you also forbid me your sight, the only consolation I had left? Fly rather, answered Siffredi's daughter, shedding some tears; the sight of what one tenderly loves is no longer a happiness, when the hope of possessing it is lost. Farewell, Sir, avoid me as much as possible. You owe that effort at least to your own honour and my reputation. I implore it also, for my quiet: for though my virtue is not at all alarmed at the emotions of my heart, yet the remembrance of your

love raises such violent conflicts in me, that I shall hardly be able to endure them.

She pronounced these words with such emotion, that she accidentally threw down a candlestick that stood on the table behind her; and the candle going out, she took it up, and opened the door of the anti-chamber, to go to Nisa, who was not yet a-bed, to get it lighted. She was no sooner returned with it, than the King, who waited for her, began anew to press her to suffer his attachment. At hearing Henriquez's voice, the Constable rushed into the chamber sword-in-hand, almost at the back of his wife, and advancing towards the King, with all the fury that resentment could inspire, This is too much, tyrant! cried he; think not I am so base as to endure with patience the affront thou hast done my honour. Ah, traitor, replied the King, putting himself in a posture of defence, neither do thou imagine thou shalt execute thy design with impunity. Thus saying, they began a fight, which was too furious to be of long continuance. The Constable fearing that Siffredi and his servants, alarmed at Blanch's cries, should run in and oppose his vengeance, fought without caution. His rage deprived him of all judgment; he took his measures so ill, that he run himself upon his enemy's sword. It went quite through his body, up to the hilt. He fell, and the King immediately stayed his hand.

Blanch, grieved to see her husband in that condition, and surmounting the natural indifference she had for him, threw herself on the floor, to give him assistance. But the unhappy husband was too much prepossessed against her to be in the least affected by the testimonies she gave him of her grief and compassion. Death itself, which he felt approaching, could not suppress the transports of his jealousy. He thought of

nothing in his last moments, but the happiness of his rival; and this idea was so tormenting to him, that collecting all the strength he had left, he lifted up his sword, which he still had in his hand, and plunged it in Blanch's breast. Die, said he while he stabbed her, die, thou perfidious woman, since not even the bonds of marriage could secure me a faith, which you had promised me at the altar. And thou, Henriquez, continued he, shalt not now exult in thy destiny. Thou canst not enjoy the fruits of my destruction, and therefore I die satisfied. No sooner had he thus spoken, than he expired, and his countenance, covered as it were with the shades of death, had still in it something fierce and terrible. That of Blanch exhibited a quite different prospect. The wound she had received was mortal; she dropt down upon the body of her dying spouse, and the blood of this innocent victim ran in one and the same stream with that of her murderer, who had so suddenly executed his cruel resolution, that Henriquez had not time to prevent its effects.

That unhappy Prince seeing Siffredi's daughter fall to the ground, gave a loud cry, and, more confounded than she with the blow that robbed her of life, hastened to give her the same assistance she had offered to the Constable. But in a dying voice she said to him, Sir, you trouble yourself in vain. I am the victim which unrelenting fate demands. May this appease its wrath, and make your reign happy and quiet. Leontio, drawn by her cries, entered the chamber just as she pronounced these words, and, struck with the objects he beheld, stood motionless; while Blanch, without perceiving him, continued speaking to the King. Adieu, Prince, said she; cherish my memory: my tenderness and misfortunes claim that favour. Entertain
 • no resentment against my father: Have pity on his age

and affliction, and forgive his zeal. Above all, make my innocence known: this is what I beseech you to perform, above all things. Farewell, my dear Henriquez.—I die—receive my last breath.

Thus saying, she expired. The King, having continued for some time in a melancholy silence, said to Siffredi, who appeared to be very much afflicted, Leontio, behold your own work, and in this tragical event consider the fruit of your officious care and zeal for me! The old man was so overwhelmed with woe, that he made no reply. But why should I pretend to describe those things which no words can express? Let it suffice to say, that when their sorrow permitted them to break out into the exclamations of despair, they made such complaints as would have pierced an adamant heart.

Henriquez all his life preserved a tender remembrance of his mistress, and could never be prevailed upon to marry Constantia, who being joined by the Infant Don Pedro, they conjointly endeavoured, by all the means that could be thought of, to force the execution of Roger's will: but they were at last obliged to yield to the superior power of Prince Henriquez, who overcame all his enemies. As for Siffredi, the grief he felt for having been the sole cause of so many mischiefs detached him from the world, and rendered his native country odious to him: he therefore abandoned Sicily, and sailing into Spain, with Portia, the only child he had left, purchased this castle. He lived here for near fifteen years after the death of Blanch, and had the consolation, before he died, of seeing Portia settled. She married Don Jerome de Silva, and I am the only fruit of that marriage. This, continued Don Pedro's widow, is the history of my family, and the faithful relation of the misfortunes represented in that picture, which my uncle Leontio caused to be

painted, that he might leave to his posterity a monument of that unhappy event.



CHAP. V.

Aurora's Behaviour at Salamanca.

WHEN the lady had finished this relation, Ortiz, her companions, and myself withdrew, leaving Aurora and Elvira by themselves in the hall, where they spent the remainder of the day in discourse together. They thought they could never have enough of each other's company; and next day when we set forward upon our journey, they were as much affected at parting, as two friends who have lived many years agreeably together.

We at length arrived at Salamanca, without meeting with any other accident in our way. There we immediately hired a house ready-furnished, and Dame Ortiz, as we had before concerted it, assumed the name of Donna Chimena de Guzman. She had been a duenna too long not to be a good actress. Going out with Aurora, a waiting-maid, and a valet, one morning, she repaired to a house where lodgings were let, and where we were informed Pacheco commonly lived. Having asked if they had an apartment to be let, they answered in the affirmative, and shewed her a very neat one, which she hired. She gave earnest to the landlady, telling her that it was for a nephew of hers, who was coming from Toledo to study at Salamanca, and that she expected he would arrive that very day.

My mistress and the duenna, after having secured this lodging, returned to their other house, and the

beautiful Aurora, without losing any time, transformed herself into a cavalier. She covered her own black hair with a light-coloured kind of wig, painting her eye brows of the same colour, and adjusting herself in such a manner, as that she might very well pass for a young gentleman. Her carriage was free and easy, and excepting her face, which was a little too handsome for a man, nothing could possibly betray her disguise. The maid, who was to serve in quality of page, disguised herself also, and we were under no apprehension of her playing her part amiss, for she had a good modest assurance in her air, which agreed very well with the character she was to perform. In the afternoon, these two actresses being in a condition to appear on the stage, that is, in the lodging which had been taken, I accompanied them thither in a coach, with every thing necessary for our enterprize.

Bernarda Ramirez (so the landlady was called) politely received us, and conducted us to our apartment, where we began to talk with her, and agreed with her for our board by the month. Then asking her if she had many lodgers beside us, she replied, I have none at present, but I need not want them, if I would take in all sorts of people; I receive none but young noblemen; and I expect one this evening, who comes from Madrid to finish his studies. His name is Don Lewis Pacheco; perhaps you may have heard of him. No, answered Aurora, I know nothing of him; and I should be obliged to you if you would give me some account of him, since I am to lodge in the same house with him. Sir, replied the landlady, looking at this false cavalier, he is a very fine gentleman I assure you, and not unlike yourself. Ah! you will be delightful company for each other! By St. Jago, I may boast of having two of the handsomest gentlemen in all Spain in my house.

This Don Lewis then, said my mistress, is undoubtedly a very happy man among the fair sex in this town? Ay, that he is, answered the old woman, he is a compleat gallant. He has no more to do but shew himself and conquer. Among the rest, he has charmed a lady here who has both youth and beauty, Isabella by name, an old lawyer's daughter, she is almost mad for him. And tell me, good mother, interrupted Aurora earnestly, is he on his side as fond of her? He was, answered Bernarda Ramirez, before his departure from Madrid; but I really cannot say that he is still in the same mind; for he, like all other young men, is very changeable.

Scarce had the good widow done speaking, when we heard a noise in the court-yard. Looking out of the window, we perceived two men light from their horses: these were no other than Don Lewis de Pacheco, who was just arrived from Madrid, with a valet de chambre. The old woman left us to go receive him; and my mistress prepared herself, not without emotion, to act the part of Don Felix. Don Lewis, in a short time, entered our apartment, booted and spurred as he was, and saluted Aurora, saying, Understanding that a young nobleman of Toledo lodges here, I beg leave to express my joy in having him for a companion. While my mistress made a return to this compliment, Pacheco seemed amazed to see so lovely a cavalier. He could not help telling her that he had never before beheld so handsome and well-made a man. After several compliments on both sides, Don Lewis retired to his apartment.

While he was changing his cloaths, a sort of page, who wanted to deliver a letter to him, happened accidentally to meet Aurora upon the stair-case. He took her for Don Lewis, and giving her the billet, said, Sig-

nior cavalier, though I never saw Don Pacheco, I believe I need not ask if you are he. I dare say I am not mistaken. No, young man, said my mistress, with admirable presence of mind, you are very right, and you acquit yourself of your commission very well. I shall send an answer very soon. Upon this the page withdrew, and Aurora shutting herself up with her maid and me, opened the letter, and read the following words.

BEING just now informed of your arrival at Salamanca, my transport had well nigh got the better of my reason. But is Isabella still as dear to you as ever? Make haste, and assure her in person of your constancy. I am afraid she will scarce be able to support the rapture, if she finds you unchanged."

A mighty passionate billet, said Aurora; it proclaims the violence of the author's love. This lady is a rival not to be contemned. I must use my utmost efforts to detach Don Lewis from her, and even to prevent him from visiting her again. The undertaking, I own, is difficult; but I do not despair of accomplishing my design. Accordingly, my mistress having mused a little, added, if they are not divided in four and twenty hours, I will forfeit my head. Pacheco having taken a little repose in his own apartment, returned to ours, and fell again into conversation with Aurora before supper. Signior cavalier, said he to her in a jocular manner, I believe the husbands and lovers will have no cause to rejoice at your arrival in Salamanca. You look as if you would give them some disturbance. As for my own part, I tremble for fear of being robbed of all my conquests. Your fear, an-

swered my mistress in the same tone, is not ill-grounded. Don Felix de Mendoza is a formidable man, I assure you. Besides, I have been in this country before, and know that the women are not over cruel. I rode through this town about a month ago, and stopt here a week, in which time, to tell you the truth, I enamoured the daughter of an old lawyer.

These words I perceived put Don Lewis in some disorder: May I be so bold, said he, as to ask the lady's name? How! be so bold, replied the pretended Don Felix; why should I make a mystery of such an affair to you? Do you think me more reserved than other noblemen of my time of life? Do me not so much injustice. Besides, between ourselves, the object does not deserve so much regard. She is only a poor cit; and a man of quality, you know, is never seriously in love with such creatures; but thinks he does them an honour, in condescending to debauch them. I will therefore without further ceremony acquaint you, that Isabella is the name of the lawyer's daughter. And what is the lawyer's? interrupted Pacheco impatiently, is it not Murcia de Lianna? The same, answered my mistress; here is a letter which she has just now sent me. You may read it, and see whether the lady is fond of me or no. Don Lewis casting his eyes over the billet, knew the hand, and was in the utmost confusion and disturbance. What is the matter? continued Aurora in a surprise, you change colour! I am afraid you have some concern in this lady. I am very sorry, if this is the case, for having spoken so freely of her.

On the contrary, said Don Lewis with indignation and resentment, I am rather obliged to you for your information. Perfidious creature! Don Felix, I am eternally indebted to you. You have extricated me out

of an error, in which I might have remained a great

while. I imagined that Isabella loved, nay adored me. I had indeed some regard for that wretch; but I find she is a perfect coquette, and ought to be despised. I applaud your resentment, said Aurora, feigning in her turn a sort of indignation. I think so mean a creature as a lawyer's daughter might well have been satisfied with one nobleman at a time, especially so accomplished a one as you are. Her inconstancy is inexcusable; and I am so far from being pleased with her sacrificing your love to mine, that I intend to punish her by slighting her favours. For my part, answered Pacheco, the revenge I mean to take is never to see her again. You are very much in the right, cried the false Mendoza; yet to shew her how much she is despised by us both, I think each of us should write to her an insulting letter. I will inclose them under one cover, and send them as an answer to her billet. But before we go thus far, do you see how your heart stands affected; perhaps you may one day repent of having broken with Isabella. No, no, interrupted Don Lewis, I shall never be so weak. I will do what you propose, in order to mortify the perfidious creature.

They immediately sent me for pen, ink, and paper, and both of them sat down to compose very obliging letters to the daughter of Dr. Murcia de Lianna. Pacheco could not find terms strong enough to express his sentiments, and he tore five or six half-finished billets, because they seemed to him to be too civil. However he was pleased with one at last, as he might well be, it containing the following words:

"I WOULD have you learn, my fair one, to know yourself better; and be no longer so vain as to imagine that I am enamoured with you. It must be other kind of merit than yours that can engage my

“affections. Your charms are not sufficient to amuse
“a nobleman for a few moments. Such a one as you
“are not worthy of the meanest scholars of the univer-
“sity.”

This was the gracious billet he resolved to send; and Aurora having finished hers, which was in no milder terms than the other, she sealed them both up, and gave them to me, saying, Gil Blas, be sure you deliver this packet to Isabella this evening; you understand me, continues she, tipping me the wink, the meaning of which I easily understood. Yes, Sir, replied I, you may depend upon being obeyed to your satisfaction.

I immediately went about my business, and going along the street, Oho, Gil Blas, says I to myself, then it seems you act the valet in this comedy. Well, friend, shew that you have wit enough to perform so considerable a part. Signior Don Felix, as you see, has so good an opinion of you, that he thought it enough to tip you the wink. And is he to blame for that? No, I understand what he would be at. He would have me deliver only Don Lewis's billet. That is the interpretation of the sign, than which nothing can be more plain. I therefore immediately opened the packet, from which I took Pacheco's letter, and carried it to the daughter of Doctor Murcia, whose house I was not long in finding out. I met the little page who had given Aurora the billet at the door; Brother, said I to him, are not you the servant of the daughter of Dr. Murcia? Yes, answered he. You have so obliging a physiognomy, replied I, that I take the liberty to desire you to deliver this billet-doux to your mistress.

The page enquiring who sent it, I had no sooner told him Don Lewis de Pacheco, than he bid me follow him, for he was commanded to bring me to Isabella herself. I allowed myself therefore to be intro-

duced into a little chamber, where the lady immediately came to me. I was struck at her beautiful face, having never beheld more regular features. Her air was affected and childish, but for all that, I dare swear she had seen thirty years pass over her head. Friend, said she, with a pleasant countenance, do you belong to Don Lewis de Pacheco? Yes, replied I, I have been in his service these three weeks: and then gave her the fatal billet. She read it over twice or thrice, and seemed to distrust the evidence of her own senses. And indeed she certainly expected such an answer. She raised her eyes to heaven, bit her lips, and shewed in her countenance the uneasiness she felt in her heart. Afterwards, suddenly addressing herself to me, Friend, said she, is Don Lewis run mad? Pray let me know, if you can, why he writes in this genteel style? What dæmon possesses him? If he had a mind to break with me, could he not have done it without abusing me so grossly? Madam, said I, my master is certainly to blame: but he was in a manner forced to it. If you will promise to keep the secret, I will inform you of the whole affair. I do promise, said she hastily, never to betray you, therefore explain yourself freely. Well then, answered I, the case briefly is thus. Having just read your billet, a lady entirely covered with a veil entered our lodgings, and enquiring for my master, talked to him in private a good while, and at last I heard her say to him, you swear to me that you will never see her again; but that will not satisfy me, you must also write a billet to her this moment, which I shall dictate. Don Lewis did as she desired, and delivering the letter to me, enquire, said he, where Dr. Murcia de Lianna lives, and contrive to get this paper into the hands of his daughter Isabella. You see, madam, added I, this severe letter is the work of a rival, and consequently my

master is not so much to blame. O Heavens! cried she, the other was bad, but this is still worse. His infidelity offends me more than the shocking words he writes to me. Ah! the perfidious wretch!—But, added she immediately, assuming a more haughty air, let him abandon himself to his new mistress without constraint, I do not intend in the least to thwart him. Tell him I should have left the field free to my rival, without his thus grossly insulting me; and that I too much condemn so fickle a lover, to be in the least desirous of recalling him. Thus saying, she sent me away, and retired, very much incensed at Don Lewis.

I left the Doctor's house very well satisfied with what I had done, and I fancied that I should soon become a very dextrous cheat. I returned to our lodgings, where I found Mendoza and Pacheco at supper together, conversing as freely as if they had been acquainted from their infancy. Aurora perceiving by my cheerful countenance, that I had acquitted myself successfully of my commission, Well, Gil Blas, said she, give us an account of your message. Being obliged to trust again to my own finess, I said I had delivered the packet, and Isabella having read the two billets contained in it, instead of seeming disconcerted, she fell into an immoderate fit of laughter; being a little recovered from which, she said, upon my conscience, young noblemen have an admirable style! I have hardly known any body write half so agreeably. She carries it off then triumphantly, cried my mistress; she must certainly be a compleat coquette. For my part, said Don Lewis, I am astonished at Isabella's behaving thus: she must certainly have quite changed her character during my absence. I own, replied Aurora, I could not have thought her such a person: but there are some women who can assume all manner of shapes.

I was once in love with one of these, who made me her dupe a long while. Gil Blas, you can tell what a demure air she had. Yes truly, said I, she had a look that would have cozened the most wary. I myself might have been caught by it.

My talking thus made Pacheco and the false Mendoza burst into a loud laugh, one, because I bore witness against an imaginary damsel, and the other at the expressions I made use of. The discourse continued to turn upon those women who have the art of dissembling; and the result of our conference was, that Isabella was plainly convicted of being an arrant jilt.

Don Lewis renewed his protestations of never seeing her again; and Don Felix, after his example, swore he would always hold her in the utmost contempt. After these protestations, they contracted a friendship together, and promised to conceal nothing from each other. After a great many other compliments, which passed after supper, each retired to his apartment to go to bed. I followed Aurora to hers, and gave her an exact account of the conversation I had with Isabella. I thought she would have embraced me in the transport of her joy. Dear Gil Blas, said she, I am charmed with thy fruitfulness of invention. When one is unfortunately engaged in a passion which compels us to have recourse to stratagems, what an advantage is it to have so good an assistant as thee! Courage, my lad, we have removed one rival, that might have been troublesome to us. That is no bad prognostic: but as we lovers are liable to strange turns of fortune, I think we must make short work of it, and bring Aurora de Guzman on the stage to-morrow. I approved of her scheme, and leaving Signior Don Felix with his page, withdrew to my bed in the little closet.



CHAP. VI.

What Stratagems Aurora made use of to captivate Don Lewis de Pacheco.

NEXT morning, when the two new friends met, they began again with embraces, which Aurora was obliged to give and receive, in order to act the part of Don Felix the more naturally. They went to walk about the town, and I attended them, together with Chilindron, Don Lewis's valet. We stopped near the university, to look at some titles of books which were stuck upon the gate. A good many people were amusing themselves with reading them, and among the rest I perceived a little man, who gave his opinion of all the books that were so published. The people were very attentive to what he said, and he seemed to think that it was no more than he deserved. He appeared to be vastly vain and positive, as little men generally are. That new translation of Horace, said he, which is advertised in such large characters, is a mean prose affair, executed by an old college-author; a book mightily esteemed among the students, who have already consumed four editions of it; and yet there is not one man of taste that will so much as look into it. His opinion was not a whit more favourable of all the other books. He ridiculed them all without exception. I imagine he was an author. I should not have been tired of hearing him to an end; but I was obliged to follow Don Lewis and Don Felix, who being as little pleased with his prate as interested in the books which he criticized, walked off and left both him and the university.

We returned to our lodging at dinner-time, and my mistress sitting down at table with Pacheco, cunningly turned the conversation on her own family. My father, said she, is a younger brother of the house of Mendoza, and settled at Toledo; and my mother is sister to Donna Chimena de Guzman, who came lately to Salamanca about an important affair, with her niece Aurora, the only daughter of Don Vincent de Guzman, with whom perhaps you are acquainted. No, replied Don Lewis, but I have often heard of him, as well as of your cousin Aurora. May I believe what is reported of her? I have been assured that nothing equals her beauty but her understanding. As for understanding, answered Don Felix, she does not want for it, and that well cultivated too; but I do not think her so very handsome. People say that we two are very like one another. If that be the case, cried Pacheco, she does not come short of her character. Your features are very regular; your cousin therefore must needs be enchanting. I wish I had an opportunity of seeing and talking with her. I will satisfy that curiosity, replied the feigned Mendoza, and this very afternoon too. I will take you to my aunt's house with me.

My mistress after this changed the discourse, and talked of indifferent matters. After dinner, while they were preparing to go and visit Donna Chimena, I slipped out before, and ran to bid the duenna make ready to receive them. Then returning instantly, I accompanied Don Felix, who conducted Don Lewis to his aunt's house. But they had scarce entered it, when they met Madam Chimena, who beckoned them not to make a noise. Hush, hush, said she whispering, you will wake my niece, who has ever since yesterday been terribly afflicted with the head-ach, which has just now

left her, and the poor child has been asleep about a quarter of an hour. I am very sorry for this disappointment, said Mendoza; I was in hopes we should have seen my cousin, and had promised that happiness to my friend Pacheco, who came hither for that purpose. The affair is not in such a mighty hurry, replied Ortiz smiling, you may defer it till to-morrow. The cavaliers having conversed a little with the old woman, took their leave and retired.

Don Lewis took us to see a young gentleman of his acquaintance, whose name was Don Gabriel de Pedros, with whom we passed the remainder of the day; we supped there too, and did not leave his house till two o'clock in the morning. We had got about half way home, when we stumbled over two men lying stretched upon the street. Imagining they were unfortunate people who had been murdered and robbed, we stopt to assist them, if it was not too late; and as we were endeavouring to inform ourselves of their condition, as well as the darkness of the night would allow, the watch came up to us. At first they took us for the murderers, and surrounded us; but they thought more favourably of us, when they heard us speak, and by the help of a dark lanthorn perceived the faces of Mendoza and Pacheco. Afterwards they examined the condition of the two men, whom we had imagined to be dead, and found that it was a fat licentiate, with his man, both intoxicated with wine, or rather dead drunk. Gentlemen, cried one of the watch, I know this epicure: it is the licentiate Guyomar, rector of our university. For all he is in this condition at present, I can tell you he is a great scholar, a wonderful genius! There is never a philosopher of them all, but what he can confute in an argument. He has an amazing flow of words; it is a pity he is a little too much given to

law-suits, women, and wine. He has undoubtedly been visiting his Isabella to-night; but unluckily his guide has got as drunk as himself, and they have both tumbled into the kennel. This misfortune often happened to the good licentiate before he was made rector: and you see honour does not always change men's manners. We left the two drunkards in the hands of the watch, who undertook to carry them home, and pursued our course to our lodgings, thinking of nothing but taking our repose.

Don Felix and Don Lewis arose about noon, and Aurora was the first thing they talked of. Go to my aunt, Gil Blas, said Aurora, and ask her if Signior Pacheco and I can see my cousin to-day. I went out to acquit myself of this commission, or rather to consult with the duenna what we should do. When we had taken our measures, I returned to the pretended Mendoza, saying, Sir, your cousin Aurora is quite recovered of her indisposition, and she herself ordered me to tell you that she will be extremely glad to see you; and Donna Chimena bid me assure Signior Pacheco, that he should, on your account, be always very welcome at her house.

These last words I perceived vastly pleased Don Lewis: my mistress observed the same, and took it as a happy omen. A little before dinner, Chimena's footman appeared, and said to Don Felix, Sir, a man from Toledo came to ask for you at your aunt's house, and left this note for you. The pretended Mendoza opened it, and read the following words:

"IF you are desirous of hearing news from your father, and of being informed of other important matters, fail not to repair to the Black horse, near the university, immediately upon the receipt of this."

I am so impatient to hear this news, said he, that I am determined instantly to begone. Signior Pacheco, continued he, if I do not return in two hours, you may go to my aunt's by yourself, and I will come to you there in the afternoon. The message which Gil Blas brought you from Donna Chimena gives you a very good pretence to visit there. Thus saying, he went out, and commanded me to follow him.

We immediately went to Ortiz's house, instead of going to the Black-horse, as you may easily imagine. As soon as we arrived there, Aurora took off her fair-coloured hair, washed her eye-brows, put on a woman's habit, and became a very genteel black-eyed lady, as she naturally was. Her disguise made such an alteration in her, that Aurora and Don Felix appeared to be two different people. Besides, she seemed taller in a woman's dress than in a man's, her high-heeled shoes contributing not a little to make her so. When she had improved her charms with all the assistance that art could lend them, she waited for Don Lewis with an emotion composed of hope and fear. Sometimes she thought she might confide in her wit and beauty; and sometimes she trembled for fear that this her first attempt should prove unsuccessful. Ortiz, on her side, summoned all her finesse to second my mistress. For my part, that I might not be seen in the house by Pacheco, like those players that appear only in the last act, I went out as soon as I had dined, in order to shew myself towards the end of the visit.

Every thing being thus set in order, Don Lewis arrived, and was very politely received by Donna Chimena. After he had been with Aurora near three hours, I entered the room where they sat, and addressing myself to the cavalier, Signior, said I, my master Don Felix cannot wait upon you here to-day; but

begs you will excuse him, as he is with three Tole-
dians, from whom he cannot possibly get away. Ah,
the little rake! cried Donna Chimena, he is fuddling,
I dare lay my life. No, Madam, replied I, they are
talking together of very serious affairs. He is extreme-
ly sorry that he cannot come hither, as he promised.
He charged me to tell this both to you and your niece
Donna Aurora. Oh! I will have none of his apolo-
gies, said my mistress; he knows I have been ill, and
should have shewn a little more concern for his relati-
on. Ah, Madam! cried Don Lewis, do not form such
a cruel resolution: Don Felix is rather to be pitied for
losing the pleasure of your conversation this single time.

Having diverted themselves for some time with this
subject, Pacheco withdrew. The beautiful Aurora
immediately changed her habit, and resuming the ap-
pearance of a cavalier, returned to our lodgings as soon
as possible. I ask pardon, my dear friend, said she to
Don Lewis, for failing to meet you at my aunt's, but
I could not get rid of the company I was in. What
consoles me for the disappointment is, that you have
had the satisfaction to gratify your curiosity. Well,
what think you of my cousin? I am enchanted with
her, replied Pacheco. You had reason to say she was
like you; I never beheld features more resembling each
other: the same turn of face, the same eyes, the same
tone of voice. Yet there is some small difference be-
tween you: Aurora is taller than you; she is brown,
and you are fair; you are merry, she is grave. This
is all that can distinguish you the one from the other.
As for understanding, continued he, I do not believe a
celestial being can have more than your cousin. In
short, she is the most accomplished lady I ever saw.

These last words were pronounced so seriously by
Signior Pacheco, that Don Felix said to him smiling,

Friend, I would advise you not to visit Aurora de Guzman again, if you study your own repose: she may make your heart ake, and inspire you with a passion. I need not another sight of her to make me in love, interrupted he, that is done already. I am sorry to hear that, replied the false Mendoza, for you are not a man that will settle, and my cousin is no Isabella. I can assure you beforehand, that she will never listen to a lover except on honourable terms. Honourable! replied Don Lewis: sure nobody would offer any other to a young lady of her birth. Alas! I should look upon myself as the happiest of mankind, if she would approve of my addresses, and consent to join her destiny to mine.

If these are your real sentiments, replied Don Felix, I offer you my assistance. I will do you all the good offices with Aurora that I am able, and will to-morrow bring over my aunt, who has a great sway over her. Pacheco heartily thanked the cavalier who made him such fair promises; and we perceived with joy that our stratagem succeeded as we could wish. We made use of a new invention the day following to increase Don Lewis's passion. My mistress having been with Donna Chimena, under pretence of rendering her favourable to Don Lewis, returned and said, I have spoken to my aunt, and had no small trouble to make her your friend. She was very much prejudiced against you: for some body or other had given her a very bad character of you: but I boldly undertook your defence, and have at length destroyed the ill impressions she had received of your morals.

But this is not all, added Aurora; you must talk with my aunt, in my presence; for by that means we may secure her to our interests. Pacheco expressed great impatience to talk with Donna Chimena, and

that satisfaction was granted to him next morning, when the false Mendoza carried him to madam Ortiz, and they three had a conversation together, in which Don Lewis shewed that he had suffered himself to be very much captivated in a short time. The crafty Chimena feigned to be moved at his tenderness, and promised her utmost endeavour to persuade her niece to accept of him for a husband. Pacheco immediately threw himself at the feet of so kind an aunt, and thanked her for all her favours. Upon this, Don Felix asked if his cousin was up. No, answered the duenna, she is still a-bed, and you cannot see her now; but return in the afternoon, and you shall converse with her as long as you chuse. This answer of madam Chimena redoubled, as you may easily imagine, the joy of Don Lewis, who thought the remainder of the forenoon very tedious. He went back with Mendoza to his lodgings, who was very well pleased with observing in him all the marks of a real lover.

Their whole discourse was about Aurora; and when they had dined, Don Felix said to Pacheco, There is a sudden thought come into my head. I am of opinion that I should go to my aunt's some minutes before you, and have a little chat with my cousin, that I may discover how her heart is disposed towards you. Don Lewis approving of the scheme, let his friend go first, and did not set out till an hour after. My mistress made such good use of her time, that she was entirely dressed in her woman's cloaths when her lover arrived. I thought, said the cavalier, after having saluted Aurora and the duenna, I should have met Don Felix here. You will see him presently, replied Donna Chimena, he is writing in my closet. Pacheco seemed satisfied with this excuse, and entered into conversation with the ladies. Yet, notwithstanding the pre-

sence of his beloved object, he found that the hours stole away, and no Mendoza appeared. He testified some surprize at this disappointment: upon which Aurora suddenly changing countenance, began to laugh, and said to Don Lewis, Is it possible that you should never in the least suspect the trick that has been played upon you? Do a false head of hair, and painted eye-brows, make me so different from myself, that you have hitherto been deceived by them? Know then, Pacheco, that you have been mistaken, and that Don Felix de Mendoza and Aurora de Guzman are one and the same person.

Not satisfied with extricating him out of his error, she also confessed the passion she had for him, and informed him of all the steps she had taken to bring things to the condition they were now in. Don Lewis, no less charmed than surprized at what he heard, threw himself at my mistress's feet, exclaiming in a transport of joy, Ah, amiable Aurora, may I indeed believe that I am the happy mortal whom you have so greatly favoured? What can I do to shew my acknowledgments? The most perfect love can never enough repay it. These words were followed by numberless other tender and passionate expressions; after which the lovers concerted the measures they should take for the accomplishment of their mutual desires; and it was resolved that we should immediately set out for Madrid, where we should end our play by a wedding. This design was no sooner formed than executed. A fortnight after Don Lewis married my mistress, and their nuptials were celebrated with great rejoicings and grandeur.



C H A P. VII.

Gil Blas leaves Aurora's Service, and goes into that of Don Gonzales de Pacheco.

ABOUT three weeks after this marriage, my mistress, wanting to reward me for the service I had done her, presented me with an hundred pistoles, saying, My good friend Gil Blas, I am not for turning you away; you may stay with me as long as you chuse; but Don Gonzales de Pacheco, an uncle of my husband's, is desirous of having you for a valet de chambre. I gave him so good a character of you, that he begged I would be so obliging as to part with you to him. He is an old nobleman, continued she, of an admirable character, and I dare say you will live very happily with him.

I returned Aurora my most humble thanks for her regard for me; and as she had no longer any further occasion for me, accepted the post to which I was recommended; and I did it the more willingly because I should still be in the family. One morning therefore I went from my new-married mistress to Signior Don Gonzales, whom I found in bed, though it was almost noon. When I entered his chamber, he was taking some broth, which a page had just brought him in. The old gentleman's mustachios were papered up, his eyes looked like an extinguished candle, and his face was pale and meagre. He was one of those old battered beaux, who, having been very loose in their youth, are not a whit more sedate in their old age. He received me very graciously, and told me, that if I would serve him with as much zeal as I had

manifested for his niece, he would make my life very easy. I promised to do so, and that moment he engaged me in his service.

Behold me now with a new master, but sure such a one as was never seen before. When he got up, I imagined I beheld the resurrection of Lazarus. His body was so macerated, that when it was naked, an anatomist might have taught osteology upon it. He had such spindle-shanks, that they looked but very thin, even after he had pulled on three or four pair of stockings. Besides, this living mummy was troubled with an asthma, and coughed at every word he spoke. Having drank chocolate, he called for paper, pen, and ink, wrote a billet, which he sealed, and sent away by the page who had given him the broth; then turning to me, Friend, said he, I intend for the future to send you on my errands, especially those to Donna Euphrasia, a young lady of whom I am passionately fond, and who is not less enamoured with me.

Heavens! said I to myself, how can young people avoid fancying themselves beloved, when this old dotard believes himself adored! Gil Blas, continued he, you shall go with me to-day to see her: I sup at her house almost every night; you will be charmed with her prudence and reserve. Far from being like those silly coquettes who can relish nothing but youth, and are won wholly by appearances, she has an understanding already mature and judicious; she values a man for nothing but his sense: and prefers a lover of delicacy and taste, to one of the most shining exteriors. Don Gonzales did not here end his mistress's eulogium; he represented her as the epitome of all perfections; but he had an auditor that was not so easy of belief upon this subject. After the conduct of the actresses, which I had seen, I could not think that any old gentleman

was ever happy in his amours. I pretended, however, out of complaisance to my master, to believe all that he said. I did more; I extolled Euphrasia's good taste; and was even impudent enough to affirm, that she could not have fixed her choice upon a more amiable gallant. The good old gentleman did not perceive that I made game of him; on the contrary, he praised my good sense: so true it is, that flattery, though never so gross, will be swallowed by the great.

After my master had written his letter, he pulled some hairs out of his beard with a pair of pincers; then he cleared his eyes of a thick gum that filled them, washed his ears and hands, and after having finished his ablutions, painted his mustachios, eye-brows, and hair of a black colour. He continued longer at his toilet than an old widow who studies to conceal the havock which age has made on her. He had hardly done dressing, when there entered another gentleman in years of his acquaintance, whose name was the Count d'Asumar. This man freely shewed the greyness of his hair, supported himself on a cane, and seemed to glory in his old age, instead of endeavouring to appear young. Signior Pacheco, said he at his entrance, I am come to dine. You are extremely welcome, Count, replied my master. Mean while, having embraced each other, they sat down, and began to chat till dinner was ready.

Their conversation at first turned upon a bull-feast, which had been celebrated a few days before; and as they mentioned the cavaliers who had distinguished themselves by the greatest courage and address, the old count, like another Nestor, who took occasion from every thing to praise the times past, said sighing, Alas! I see no men now-a-days comparable to those I have seen formerly; neither are the tournaments performed

with half the magnificence they were, when I was a young fellow. I laughed within myself at the good man's prejudice at a thing he was past. I remember, when the desert was set upon the table, and he saw among it some very fine peaches, he said, In my memory, the peaches were much larger than they are at present; nature degenerates every day. At that rate, answered Don Gonzales smiling, the peaches of Adam's time must have been immensely large.

Count d'Asumar staid almost till night with my master, who no sooner found himself disengaged, than he went out, bidding me follow him. We went to Euphrasia's, who lodged about a hundred paces from our house, and we found her in a very handsome apartment. She was gaily dressed, and had an air of youthfulness which made me take her for a mere girl, although she was good thirty years old at least. She might really be called handsome, and her understanding soon raised my admiration. She was none of those flirting coquettes, who talk nothing but nonsense, which they accompany with a loose forward air; she was modest in her manners, as well as in her conversation, and talked with a great deal of wit, without seeming to value herself too much upon it. O heavens! said I to myself, is it possible that a person of such delicacy can be a kept mistress? For my part, I imagined that impudence was inseparable from all women of her profession, and was surprized at seeing one so modest in appearance, without reflecting that these ladies know how to assume any shape, that is conformable to the humour and disposition of the cully that falls in their clutches. When their keepers love spirit and life, they are brisk and wanton; and with those who love reserve, practise a prudent and virtuous behaviour. They are the true chameleons, who change

colour according to the humour and genius of the men who visit them.

My master was none of those noblemen who are taken with high-spirited mistresses: he could not endure ladies of that class; a woman to attract him must have the appearance of a vestal. Euphrasia therefore modelled herself accordingly, and gave a proof that all the good actresses are not employed in the theatre. I left Don Gonzales with his nymph, and went down into a hall, where I found an old-chambermaid, whom I knew again, she having been formerly a waiting-woman to an actress. She also remembered me, and said, What, is this you, Gil Blas? you have left Arsenia then, as I have Constantia? Yes, truly, replied I, a long while since. I have since served a lady of quality. A player's life is not to my taste. I quit-
ted Arsenia of my own accord, without deigning to have the least eclairsissement with her. You was in the right, replied the chambermaid, who was called Beatrice; I left Constantia much after the same manner. Early one morning I gave her in my accounts with a great deal of coldness and indifference, which she received without saying one word, and so we parted very genteelly.

I am very glad, said I, to find that we are both now in more honourable families. Your mistress seems to be a sort of woman of quality, and I believe her character is very good. You are not in the least deceived, replied the old waiting-woman. She is of a very good family, and her temper is, I can assure you vastly equal and sweet. She is not one of those passionate difficult mistresses, who find fault with every thing, scold incessantly, torment their servants, and whose service is, in one word, a hell upon earth. I never once heard her grumble; but when I happen to

do any thing not exactly to her mind, she reproves me without rage, and never gives any of those epithets of which your violent ladies are so liberal. My master too, replied I, is very sweet tempered; he is the best natured man in the world: and therefore you and I are much more happy than when we served the actresses. A thousand times more happy, answered Beatrice; then I led a life of noise and tumult, but now I live, as it were, in a perfect retreat. No man enters these doors but Signior Don Gonzales. I shall see nobody but you in my solitude, for which I am very glad. I have had an affection for you a long time, and have frequently envied Laura the happiness of having you for a lover. But now I hope to be as happy as she; for, though I have not her youth and beauty, yet, by way of amends, I hate coquetry, and for fidelity I am a perfect turtle-dove.

As honest Beatrice was one of those females, who are obliged to make a tender of their favours, because nobody thinks it worth while to beg them, I was not in the least tempted to profit by her advances. However, I was not willing she should perceive my contempt of her, and was even polite enough to express myself in such a manner, as not to deprive her of all hopes of engaging me to love her. I imagined then, that I had made a conquest of this old waiting-woman, but happened to be deceived on this occasion. She did not care for me thus for my own sake only; her design was to inspire me with love, in order to bring me into her mistress's interests, for which she was so zealous, that she did not care what it cost her, so she could but serve them. I found my error next morning, when I carried a billet-doux from my master to Euphrasia, who gave me a most gracious reception, and said a thousand obliging things to me, as did her maid

also. One admired my face, the other my sagacity and prudence. Agreeable to their talking, Don Gonzales possessed a treasure in having such a valet. In short, they gave me such extravagant commendations, that I suspected their applause, and even discerned the motives of it; but I apparently received all they said with the simplicity of a fool, and by that means effectually deceived the sharpers, who at length pulled off the mask, and displayed themselves in their real colours.

Gil Blas, said Euphrasia to me, take my advice, and if you do not make your fortune, it will be your own fault. Let us act in concert, my friend. Your master is old, and his constitution so crazy, that the least fit of illness, with the assistance of a good physician, will carry him off. Let us make the best of the little time he has left, and work him up to leave the bulk of his estate to me. You shall have a good part of the booty, and you may depend upon my promise as much as if I had made it before all the notaries in Madrid. Madam, answered I, you may command your humble servant; do but let me know what you would have me do, and you shall be satisfied. Well then, replied she, watch your master narrowly, and inform me of every thing he does. When you talk to him in private, be sure to turn the conversation upon women, and from thence artfully take occasion to speak well of me. Cry up Euphrasia to him as much as possible; and I again recommend it to you to be very attentive to every thing which passes in the family of the Pacheco's. If you find that any relation of Don Gonzales is extremely officious about him, and has an eye to his estate, let me know it immediately; that is all I ask, and I warrant I shall soon do his business for him. I know the different characters of his rela-

tions, and how to make them ridiculous to him; having already put all his nephews and cousins quite out of favour.

By these instructions, and others which Euphrasia added, I concluded that this lady was one of those who trade in generous old cavaliers. She had not long since prevailed upon Don Gonzales to sell an estate, the price of which she had converted to her own use. She every day got something valuable from him, and, besides, had reason to hope that she would not be forgotten in his will. I pretended myself very willing to do any thing she desired; and, dissimulation apart, was in some doubt, as I went home, whether I should contribute to impose upon my master, or try to deceive him about his mistress. The last of these resolutions seemed more honourable than the other, and I found myself more inclined to do my duty, than betray it. Besides, Euphrasia had made me no positive promise, and that perhaps was the reason my fidelity was not corrupted. I resolved therefore zealously to serve Don Gonzales, persuading myself, that if I could bring him off from his idol, I should be better rewarded for this good action, than for all the bad ones it was in my power to commit.

That I might the more easily accomplish what I proposed, I feigned myself entirely devoted to Donna Euphrasia's service; I made her believe, that I was incessantly speaking of her to my master; and accordingly told her many lies, which she imagined to be downright truth. I insinuated myself so well into her good graces, that she thought me wholly in her interest; and still the better to impose upon her, I pretended love to Beatrice, who, delighted to behold, at her time of life, a youthful gallant at her back, never in the least suspected that I was deceiving her.

When my master and I were each with his mistress, you might have seen two different pictures in the same taste. Don Gonzales, pale and shrivelled as I have represented him, when he attempted to ogle, looked just like a man that was giving up the ghost: and my dear angel, in proportion to the seeming increase of my passion, assumed still more and more childish airs, and run over all the grimaces of an old coquette; and indeed she had seen forty years at least pass over her head. She had improved vastly in the service of some of those heroines of gallantry, who can please even in their old age, and who die, laden with the spoils of two or three generations. I was not satisfied with following my master, every night, to Euphrasia's, I sometimes went thither in the day time by myself; but at what hour soever I went in, I could never see any thing of a man there, or woman either, of a suspicious appearance; nor could I discover the least trace of infidelity in her, which greatly surprised me; for I could not believe that so beautiful a woman could be strictly constant to Don Gonzales. And in this, surely my judgment was not too weak; for the handsome Euphrasia, as you shall presently be informed, that she might wait the more patiently for my master's estate, had provided herself with a lover more agreeable to a lady of her age.

Having carried a billet to her one morning as usual, while I was in her chamber, I perceived the feet of a man concealed behind the tapestry. I went out again without seeming to have observed them; but though it was no more than I ought to have expected, and was no business of mine, I could not help resenting it. Ah, perfidious wretch, said I to myself, ah, wicked Euphrasia! Not contented with imposing upon a good old gentleman, by pretending to love him,

must you also entertain another, to crown your perfidy? What a fool was I, now I think on it, to moralize in this manner! I ought rather to have laughed at the adventure, and looked upon it as a compensation for the loathsomeness there was in the embraces of my master: I should, at least, have done better in holding my tongue, in taking this opportunity to shew myself a trusty servant. But instead of moderating my zeal, I entered warmly into Don Gonzales's interests, and gave him a faithful account of what I had seen. To this I added the temptations Euphrasia had offered, in order to seduce me. I concealed nothing of what she had said on that occasion; and it was entirely his own fault that he did not see perfectly into his mistress's character. He was confounded at the information, and a small transport of rage made me imagine that her ladyship would not pass unpunished for her infidelity. Enough, Gil Blas, said he, I am very sensible of thy attachment, and am pleased with the zeal with which you serve me. I will go this moment to Euphrasia, load her with reproaches, and break with her for ever. At these words he went out accordingly, and dispensed with my attendance, that I might avoid the scurvy figure I must infallibly have made during their eclairsissement.

I was very impatient for my master's return, not doubting, that as he had such just reasons to complain of his mistress, he would come back entirely detached from her allurements. In this thought, I applauded myself for what I had done; I represented to myself the satisfaction it would be to the lawful heirs of Don Gonzales, when they learned that their kinsman was no longer the sport of a passion so contrary to their interests: I flattered myself how much they would be obliged to me for this service, and I fancied I should

be distinguished far above all other valets, who are generally more apt to encourage their masters in debauchery, than to reclaim them. I was very fond of honour, and imagined with great pleasure, that I should pass for the Corypheus of servants. But this idea, agreeable as it was, vanished in a few hours; when Don Gonzales arriving, said, My good Gil Blas, I have had a sharp conflict with Euphrasia, who affirms, that what you have told me is all false. If I would believe her, you are no other than an impostor, entirely devoted to my relations, out of regard to whom thou sparest nothing to make me at variance with her. I saw her shed unfeigned tears, and she swore by all that was sacred, that she never made you any proposal: and that she admits of no man's visits but my own. Her maid, who seems to be a good girl, protested the same thing to me, so that, let me do my utmost, my anger was appeased.

And do you then, Sir, said I, in a dejected tone, doubt my sincerity? Do you distrust—No, my good lad, said he, interrupting me in his turn, I must needs do thee justice. I do not believe thee in a confederacy with my relations. I am persuaded that thou art concerned for my interest only, and am therefore very much obliged to thee; but appearances are deceitful: perhaps what thou sawest existed only in thy own imagination; and in that case, consider how displeasing your accusations must be to Euphrasia. However it be, she is a woman I cannot possibly help loving. I must even make the sacrifice to her which she demands, and that is to part with you. I am sorry for it, Gil Blas, added he, and I assure you I did not consent to do it without a great deal of regret: but I could not avoid it. You need not, however, be very uneasy at it, for I shall not send thee away unrecom-

penfed. Besides, I will place you with a lady of my acquaintance, where you will live very agreeably.

To see my zeal thus turned against me, mortified me not a little. I cursed Euphrasia, and pitied Don Gonzales' weakness. The good old man was very sensible, that, in turning me away only to please his mistress, he performed no very manly action; and therefore to make amends for his folly, and sweeten the pill I was to swallow, he made me a present of fifty ducats. Next day carrying me to the Marchioness of Chaves, he told her, in my presence, that I was a young fellow who possessed many good qualities; that he had a regard for me, but was obliged to part with me for family reasons, and begged she would take me into her service. She received me that moment into the number of her domestics; so that I all of a sudden saw a new house over my head.



CHAP. VIII.

The Character of the Marchioness of Chaves, and her usual Visitants.

THE Marchioness of Chaves was a widow of thirty-five, genteel, handsome, and well-shaped. She enjoyed a yearly income of ten thousand ducats, and had no children. I never saw a woman of more gravity, or that talked less, yet she was reckoned one of the most witty ladies in Madrid. The great concourse of people of quality and men of letters, that flocked thither every day, contributed, perhaps, more than any thing she said, to gain her that repute. But this I will not undertake to decide: I shall only say, that her very name imported the idea of a superior

genius, and that her house was called, by way of excellence, The Court of Judicature for Witty Productions.

And indeed there was some performance or other read here every day; sometimes new plays, and sometimes other pieces of poetry; but nothing except serious subjects were deemed worthy of attention, humorous pieces being despised; the best comedy, or the most diverting romance, was thought but a very weak production, that deserved no praise; whereas the least serious work, such as an ode, an eclogue, a sonnet, passed for the greatest effort of human wit. But it often happened, that the public did not confirm the sentence of the court; on the contrary, was sometimes so unpolite as to hiss the pieces which had been there highly extolled.

I was chamberlain in this house; I mean it was my business to get every thing ready in my mistress's apartment for the reception of company, to set chairs for the men, and stools with cushions for the women: after which I stood at the chamber-door to inform my mistress who enquired for her, and introduce the visitants. While I was employed in this office for the first time, the governor of the pages, who was then by chance in the antichamber with me, gave me everybody's character as they entered. He was called Andrew Molina, and was naturally phlegmatic and satirical, having also a good share of wit. The first that entered was a bishop. When he was gone in, the governor observed, That prelate is a man of a very odd character. Having a little credit at court, he would fain make every one imagine that he has a vast deal. He makes offers of service to all the world, without serving any body. One day meeting a gentleman at court, who saluted him, he stopped, loaded

him with compliments, and squeezing his hand, said, Sir, I am entirely devoted to you; I beg you would put me to the proof. I shall not die contented, if I have not some opportunity of obliging you. The gentleman having thanked him in a very grateful manner, they parted, and the prelate said to one of his followers, I think I know that man; I have a confused idea of having seen him somewhere before.

The son of a grandee appeared immediately after the bishop; and when I had introduced him into my mistress's chamber, That gentleman, said Molina, is another original. He frequently goes to a house, in order to talk with the master of it about some important affair, and comes away without remembering to speak a word about it. But, added the governor, seeing two ladies advance, there comes Donna Angela de Penafiel and Donna Margarita de Montalvan, two ladies, between whom there is not the least resemblance. Donna Margarita sets up for a philosopher. She will hold a dispute with the most profound doctors of Salamanca, without suffering their arguments to get the better of her argumentation. As for Donna Angela, she does not affect the virtuosi, though she is very well educated. Her conversation is sensible, her sentiments delicate, and her expression natural and noble. This last character is an amiable one, said I to Molina; but the other does not, in my opinion, agree in the least with the nature of the fair sex. It is true, said he smiling; but there are some of ours, whose philosophy fits full as ill upon them. Our mistress, continued he, is also a little tainted with philosophy. What disputations will there be here presently! Heaven grant that religion may not come upon the carpet.

Just as he had ended these words, we saw a meagre

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man come in, with a very grave crabbed look. My governor did not spare him. This, said he, is one of those serious wits, who would fain pass for great geniuses, by the favour of a few sentences learned out of Seneca, and who are easily detected to be fools and pedants, if you examine them a little closely. Afterwards came a very genteel cavalier, with a Grecian mien, that is, one who appeared to be vastly delighted with himself. Upon my asking who it was, Molina answered, He is a dramatic poet, who in his life time has written an hundred thousand verses, which never made him a groat the richer; but to make amends for that, he has lately procured a considerable settlement, by half a dozen lines of prose.

As I was about to inform myself of the nature of a fortune got so easily, we heard a great noise upon the stair-case. Oh! cried the governor, here comes the Licentiate Campanario, who gives notice of his approach before he appears, and beginning to talk at the street-door, he never gives over, till he has gone out again. Indeed we were almost stunned with the eternal *larum* of the licentiate, who at length entered the antichamber, with a batchelor of his acquaintance, and did not leave off speaking till the visit was ended. Signior Campanario, said I to Molina, seems to be a great genius. Ay, replied my governor, he has sometimes very brilliant thoughts, quaint expressions, and a good deal of humour: but then, besides his being an everlasting talker, he is often forced to make repetitions; and not to over-rate his talents, I believe the agreeable and comic air with which he seasons every thing he says, constitutes his chief merit; for very few of his sayings would do well in a jest-book.

Several other people afterwards came in, whom Molina described to me in the same manner, and a

mong the rest did not forget the Marchionefs. Our mistress, says he, has a good share of sense, notwithstanding her philosophy. She is not at all difficult to please, and one undergoes very few caprices in her service. She is one of the most reasonable women of quality that I know, and is even without passion; she has as little taste for gallantry as for play, and her whole delight is conversation. Few ladies would like to live as she does. This elogium prepossest me in favour of my mistress. Yet a few days afterwards I could not help suspecting that she was not such an enemy to love: and the cause of my suspicion was this.

One morning, while she was at her toilet, there comes to me a little man about forty years old, of a disagreeable figure, more greasy than the author Pedro de Moya, and extremely hump-backed into the bargain. When he informed me that he wanted to speak with the Marchionefs, I asked him from whom. From myself, replied he sternly. Tell her I am the gentleman of whom she spoke yesterday to Donna Anna de Velasco. I desired him to walk in, and then went to tell my lady who was there; upon which, she immediately exclaimed, Shew him in. She not only received him favourably, but likewise ordered all her women out of the room; so that my Lord Esop, more happy than an honefter man, remained alone with her. The maids and I could not help laughing at this adventure: he staid with her near an hour, after which she dismissed him, loaded with civilities, which plainly shewed that she was very much pleased with him.

In effect, his conversation captivated her so much, that at night she said to me in private, Gil Blas, when the gentleman with the hump returns, bring him up

to my apartment as secretly as you can. I obeyed; and when the little cavalier came next morning, I conducted him to my lady's chamber by a back pair of stairs. I piously performed the same office two or three times, without imagining there could be any gallantry in the case. But the malignity so natural to mankind soon inspired me with strange fancies, and I concluded that the Marchioness had either a very whimsical inclination, or else that Mr. Crump acted the part of a go-between.

In this imagination I frequently said to myself, If my lady is in love with a handsome fellow, I forgive her; but if she can like such a nasty baboon as this, truly I cannot excuse the depravity of her taste. How greatly was I mistaken in my conjecture! The little man, it seems, dabbled in magic, and as his skill had been extolled to the Marchioness, who was easily bubbled by such impostors, she honoured him with these private tête-a-têtes. He shewed things in a glass, and for money revealed all the mysteries of the cabala; or rather, to speak more truly, he was a juggler, who maintained himself at the expence of credulous people, and was said to have a great number of foolish women of quality under contribution.



C H A P. IX.

What Accident obliged Gil Blas to quit the Marchioness de Chaves; and what Course he afterwards followed.

SIX months had now elapsed since I entered the service of the Marchioness de Chaves, and I own I was very well satisfied with my condition; but fate, which must be obeyed, would not permit me to live longer in that lady's house, nor even at Madrid. The adventure which obliged me to remove from both was as follows.

One of my lady's maids, called Portia, was not only young and beautiful, but possessed such an amiable character, that I was determined to make my addresses to her, without knowing that I must dispute her heart with a rival. The Marchioness's secretary, who was extremely proud, and very much addicted to jealousy, being in love with my goddess, no sooner discovered my passion, than, without endeavouring to find out my reception with Portia, he resolved to fight me. With this intent, he appointed me to meet him one morning in a private place. He being a short man, and hardly reaching up to my shoulder, I did not look upon him as a very dangerous rival, but repaired with great confidence to the place appointed, in hopes of gaining an easy victory, and making me more agreeable in Portia's eyes: but the event did not answer my expectations. The little secretary, who had been two or three years at the fencing-school, disarmed me in a moment, as if I had been a mere infant, and holding

the point of his sword to my throat, Prepare yourself, said he, for the mortal blow, or else give me your word of honour, never more to think of Portia, and to leave the service of the Marchioness de Chaves this very day. I made him that promise, and kept it without regret. I was ashamed to appear again before my fellow servants after my defeat, especially before the fair Helen who had been the cause of our duel. I went home to fetch my money and cloaths, which having done, I set out the same day for Toledo, my purse being pretty well furnished, and my back laden with a bundle, containing my whole wearing apparel. Though I was not under an obligation to leave Madrid, yet I thought it would be best to do so, at least for some years; and formed the resolution of making the tour of Spain, and staying a little while at every town. The money I have, said I to myself, will carry me a great way; for I do not intend to be extravagant, and when it is gone, I will betake myself to service again. A youth of my accomplishments need not fear getting plenty of places, whenever he chuses to go in quest of them.

I was particularly desirous of seeing Toledo, where I arrived in three days. I took a lodging in a very good inn, where I passed for a gentleman of consequence, by means of the fine cloaths I wore, and the foppish airs I affected. I might, if I pleased, have established a correspondence with several handsome women who lived in the neighbourhood: but knowing that such affairs were very expensive, I bridled my desires, and feeling still a strong inclination for travelling, after I had seen every thing in Toledo that was curious, I left it one morning at day-break, and took the road to Cuença, with a design to go to Arragon. On the second day of my journey, I went into an inn

on the road; and while I was refreshing myself, there came in a company of alguazils, who calling for wine, fell a drinking. While they were over it, I heard them describe a young man whom they had orders to arrest. The gentleman, said one of them, is not above twenty-three years of age; he has long black hair, a Roman nose, a good shape, and is mounted upon a bay horse.

I heard them, without seeming to give attention to what they said, and, indeed, I did not much concern myself about the matter. I left them in the inn, and set forward on my journey, and I was hardly got half a mile farther, when I met a genteel young gentleman, mounted on a chesnut-coloured horse. I will forfeit my head, says I to myself, if this is not the man the alguazils are in search of: he has long black hair, and a Roman nose. I must do him a good office. Sir, says I, give me leave to ask you, if you have not some affair of honour upon your hands. The young gentleman, without making any reply, looked earnestly at me, and seemed surprized at my question. Upon which I assured him, that it was not out of curiosity that I had addressed him in this manner; and he was very well convinced of it, when I told him what I had heard in the inn. Generous stranger, said he, I cannot help owning to you, that I have cause to believe it is me whom those alguazils want to apprehend, and therefore will immediately take some other road, in order to avoid them. It is my opinion, replied I, that we seek out some place where you may be secure, and which may shelter us both from the storm of rain which I see in the air, and which will burst very soon. At that instant we reached a row of thick-spreading trees, which led us to the foot of a mountain, where we found an hermitage.

It was a large deep grotto that time had scooped in the mountain, to which human art had added a kind of front made of pebbles and shell-work, and covered all over with turf. The ground all about it was embroidered with a thousand sorts of flowers, which perfumed the air, and near the grotto there was a little opening in the rock, from whence issued, with an agreeable noise, a spring of water, that run meandering along the meadow. At the entrance of this solitary lodging stood a venerable hermit, who seemed depressed with extreme old age. With a staff in one hand he supported himself, and in the other he held a rosary of large beads, composed at least of twenty strings. His head was buried in a brown woollen cap with long ears to it, and his beard, which was whiter than snow, came down to his middle. When we approached him, Father, said I, permit us to beg a shelter of you from the impending storm. Come in, my children, replied the Anchorite, after having observed me attentively, this hermitage is at your service, and you may stay in it as long as you chuse. As for your horse, added he, he may be very well accommodated in that place, pointing to the fore-part of his habitation. The cavalier who was with me put his horse where it was directed, and then we followed the old man into the grotto.

Hardly were we got in when there fell a great shower of rain, mingled with flashes of lightning and dreadful claps of thunder. The hermit fell upon his knees before an image of St. Pacomo, which was fastened to the wall, and we followed his example. Meanwhile the thunder ceased, and we got up; but the rain continuing, and night fast approaching, the hermit said to us, My children, I would not advise you to proceed on your journey in such weather, unless

your affairs are very pressing. We answered, that we had none that hindered us from halting, and that if we did not incommode him, we would beg leave to pass the night in his hermitage. You will not in the least incommode me, said the old man, but will have reason to complain of your lodging; for you must lie hard, and I have no better than an Anchorite's repast to offer you.

Thus saying, the holy man made us sit down at a little table, and presenting us with a few onions, a morsel of bread, and a jug of water, My sons, said he, you see my ordinary repast; but for your sakes I will indulge myself a little to-day. He then brought a small cheese, and two handfuls of nuts, which he spread upon the table. The young gentleman, who had no great appetite, did not praise this food much by his eating; upon which the hermit observed to him, I perceive that you have been used to better tables than mine, or rather that sensuality has corrupted your natural taste. I have lived in the world, as you do now. The most delicate viands, the most exquisite ragouts were hardly good enough for me: but since I lived in solitude, I have restored my taste to its original purity. I at present can relish nothing but roots, fruits, and milk; in a word, that which our first parents lived upon.

During the hermit's speech, the young gentleman sunk into a profound reverie. The old man perceived it, and said, My son, you have something lies heavy upon your mind; may I not know what it is? Unbosom yourself to me. It is not curiosity, but charity alone that animates my request. My age enables me to give advice; and perhaps your situation requires it. Yes, father, replied the cavalier, sighing, I have, doubtless, occasion for advice; and since you are so kind as to offer me yours, I will take it. I believe I run no risk in discovering myself to a man of your cha-

rafter. You may do it, my son, said the old man without any apprehension. I never reveal secrets that are intrusted to me. In this confidence the cavalier thus spoke.



C H A P. X.

The History of Don Alphonso and the amiable Seraphina.

FATHER, I shall conceal nothing from you, nor from this gentleman; for after the generosity he has shewn me, I should be to blame to distrust him. I will relate to you all my misfortunes. Madrid was the place of my nativity, and my origin is this: An officer of the German guards, called the Baron de Steinbach, going home one evening, perceived at the foot of the stair case a bundle of white linen. He took it up, and carried it to his wife's apartment, where he found it to be a new-born infant, wrapped up in very neat swaddling-cloaths, with a note, which declared that it belonged to persons of quality, who would one day make themselves known; adding, that it had been baptized, and was named Alphonso. I am that unhappy child, and that is all I can inform you of my birth and parentage. I know not but that my mother may have exposed me to conceal her unlawful amours; or else, seduced by a perjured lover, found herself under the cruel necessity of disowning her infant son.

However it be, the Baron and his lady were touched with my situation, and having no children, resolved to bring me up under the name of Don Alphonso. As I advanced in years, their kindness for me increased. My flattering and complaisant behaviour made

them be every moment careſſing me : in a word, I was ſo happy as to gain their love. They gave me all kinds of maſters; my education became their only ſtudy; and far from being impatient to have my parents diſcover themſelves, they ſeemed, on the contrary, to wiſh that my birth would always remain a ſecret. As ſoon as the Baron ſaw me of an age fit to bear arms, he entered me in the ſervice, procured for me an enſign's commiſſion, gave me a ſuitable equipage, and, to animate me the more to ſearch out opportunities of acquiring glory, he repreſented to me, that the career of honour was free to all the world, and that in war I might obtain a name the more glorious, as I ſhould owe it to nothing but my own merit. At the ſame time he revealed the ſecret of my birth, which till then he had kept concealed from me. As I paſſed for his ſon in Madrid, and did really take myſelf to be ſuch, I own this piece of information gave me a great deal of uneaſineſs. I am even yet aſhamed when I think of it. The more my ſentiments aſſure me that I am of a noble deſcent, the greater my confuſion is to ſee myſelf abandoned by thoſe who gave me birth.

I went to ſerve in Flanders, but a peace was concluded ſoon after, and Spain being rid of her enemies, though not of thoſe who envied her proſperity, I returned to Madrid, where the Baron and his lady gave me freſh marks of tenderneſs. About two months after my return, a little page came into my chamber one morning, and delivered me a letter, conceived pretty nearly in theſe words: "I am neither ugly nor ill-ſhaped, and yet you often behold me at my window, without taking any notice of me. This behaviour, but ill ſuits your gallant appearance; and I am ſo vexed at it, that I wiſh I could inſpire you with love, to be revenged on your indifference."

When I had perused this billet, I did not doubt but it came from a widow called Leonora, who lived opposite to our house, and who had the reputation of being very coquettish. I interrogated the little page, who was on the reserve at first, but for a ducat which I clapped into his hand, he satisfied my curiosity. He even undertook to carry my answer, in which I informed his mistress, that I acknowledged my crime, and that I found she was already more than half revenged.

I was not at all insensible of this sort of courtship; I kept the house all that day, and was very careful to stand at my window, that I might observe the lady, who did not fail to be at hers. I made love to her in dumb shew, she answered my gestures, and the very next day sent me word by her page, that if I would be in the street between eleven and twelve o'clock, I might talk with her at a parlour-window. Though I was not much smitten with such a forward widow, I did not fail to return a very passionate answer, and waited for night with as much impatience as if I had been really in love. In the evening I went out to walk in the Prado till the hour of appointment; and was no sooner arrived at that place, than a man, mounted upon a fine horse, alighted hard by me, and accosting me very roughly, said, Are not you the son of Baron Steinbach? I am, answered I. You are the person then, said he, who intend to converse with Leonora to-night at her window. Her page has shewn me her letters, and your answers, and I have followed you from your house hither, to let you know that you have a rival who scorns to dispute a heart with such a one as you. I need say no more; we are here private enough. Let us draw therefore, unless to avoid your punishment you promise to break

off all correspondence with Leonora. Sacrifice to my demands the hopes you have conceived, or forfeit your life this moment. You ought to have requested this sacrifice, said I, and not have demanded it; I might, perhaps, have granted it to your intreaty; but to your threats I refuse it.

Well then, he replied, having tied his horse to a tree, the sword must decide it. It does not become a person of my quality to stoop so low as to intreat a man of your station. Most people of rank, were they in my place, would be revenged of you in a less honourable way. I was shocked with these last words, and seeing that he had already drawn his sword, I drew mine also. We attacked each other so furiously, that the combat was soon at an end. Whether he behaved with too much heat, or I had more skill, I know not, but I presently gave him a mortal wound, upon which I saw him stagger and fall. After this, thinking of nothing but how to escape, I mounted his horse, and took the road to Toledo. I durst not return to the Baron's house, being well assured that my adventure would afflict him greatly; and when I considered the danger I was in, I thought I could not get from Madrid too soon.

With these, and other melancholy reflexions, I rode the remaining part of the night, and all the morning: but about noon, I was obliged to stop to give my horse some rest, and to avoid the heat, which grew insupportable. I staid therefore in a village till sun-set, after which I continued my journey, resolving to make but one stage to Toledo. I had got two leagues beyond Illescas, when, about midnight, a storm like this to-day surprized me in the middle of a field; upon which I drew near the walls of a garden which I spied at some distance, and not finding a more convenient shel-

ter, stood with my horse as close as ever I could to the door of a summer-house, situated at the end of a wall, and over which was a balcony. As I leaned against the door, I found that it was open, which I ascribed to the negligence of servants. I alighted, and less out of curiosity, than to be out of the rain, which was very troublesome, notwithstanding the balcony that was over my head, I entered the ground-floor of the summer-house with my horse, which I led by the bridle.

During the storm, I employed myself in observing the place, and though I could distinguish nothing but by the help of the lightning, yet it was easy to perceive that the house belonged to no mean person. I expected still that the rain would cease, that I might be moving forward; but a great light that I observed at a distance made me change my resolution. I left my horse in the summer-house, and to secure him shut the door; after which I advanced towards the light, persuaded that some of the family were still up, and resolved to beg a lodging there for that night. Having gone through several alleys of trees, I arrived at a saloon, the door of which I found also open; I went in, and having observed that this house was very magnificent, by means of a crystal branch lighted up, I did not doubt but it belonged to some rich nobleman. The pavement was of marble, the wainscot admirably well wrought and artfully gilt, and the ceiling was painted by the most skilful masters. But what I observed most particularly was a prodigious number of busts of Spanish heroes supported on pedestals of jasper, all round the saloon. I had full time to take particular notice of all these things; for, though I listened attentively, I neither heard the least noise, nor saw a living creature appear.

On one side of the saloon there was a door upon the jar, which I pushed open, and perceived a range of rooms, and no light in any of them but the last. What shall I do? said I to myself; shall I go back to my horse, or boldly advance to that room? I concluded that the most judicious step would be to go back. But I could not resist my curiosity, or rather the force of destiny, that hurried me along in spite of my reason. I advanced from one room to another, until I arrived at that in which there was a candle burning on a marble table in a silver candlestick gilt. The furniture was all vastly noble and elegant; but my eyes were soon drawn off from that, when casting my eyes upon a bed, the curtains of which were half drawn on account of the heat, I saw a young lady, who, notwithstanding the dreadful noise of the thunder, lay in a profound sleep. I stepped softly towards her, and by the light which was in the room, discovered a complexion and features that quite dazzled me. The sight of so much beauty disordered my spirits. I felt my soul smitten and transported; but whatever constraint I put upon myself, the opinion I had of her high rank hindered me from forming a rash thought, and respect prevailed over inclination. While I was indulging myself with the pleasure of contemplating her beauty, she awoke.

You may easily imagine what was her surprize, when she beheld a strange man in her chamber at midnight. She shrieked aloud when she saw me. I endeavoured to remove her fear, and kneeling before her, said, Madam be not afraid; I am not come hither to do you the least injury. I was going on, but her consternation was such, that she did not hear me. She called her women, and nobody answering her, she put on a thin night-gown which lay upon her bed, jumps

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out, and runs through all the rooms that I had crossed, still calling her maids and a younger sister who was under her care. I every moment expected to see all her servants appear, and had reason to apprehend, that without being heard I should meet with very disagreeable treatment; but by good fortune nobody came at all her calling, but an aged domestic, who could not have given her much assistance if there had been any danger. Nevertheless, growing more resolute by his presence, she asked me sternly who I was, and how I durst break into her house. I then began to justify myself, and had no sooner told her that I found the summer-house door open, than she cried out, Just heaven! what a misfortune do I suspect!

Thus saying, she took the candle off the table, and searching every room in the house, could see neither her maids nor her sister, but observed that they had carried off all their baggage. Then her suspicions appearing but too certain, she came to me very much enraged, and said, Perfidious wretch, add not dissimulation to treachery. It was not by chance you got into the house. You belong to Don Fernando de Leyva, and are an associate in his crimes; but do not hope to escape, I have still people enough left to secure thee. Madam, answered I, do not confound me with your enemies. I do not so much as know Don Fernando de Leyva, and am even ignorant of your name and quality. I am an unhappy wretch driven from Madrid by an affair of honour; and I swear by all that is sacred, that I would not have entered your house, had I not been caught in the rain. Judge, therefore, more favourably of me, and instead of believing me an accomplice in offending you, think me rather disposed to revenge your cause. These last words, and the tone with which they were uttered, appeased the la-

dy, who seemed no longer to look upon me as an enemy: but if her indignation vanished, it was only to make way for her grief; I was moved by her tears, and was no less afflicted than herself, although I was ignorant of the cause of her sorrow. I was not contented with only joining with her in her grief; impatient to revenge her wrongs, I was seized with a transport of fury. Madam, cried I, what injury have you received? Speak, I espouse your cause. Shall I pursue Don Fernando, and pierce him to the heart? Name me all those you would have sacrificed to your resentment. Command my service. Whatever dangers, whatever misfortunes lie in the way, that stranger whom you thought confederate with your enemies will gladly run through them all for your sake.

The lady was surprized at this transport, and stopped the course of her tears. Ah, Sir, cried she, pardon my suspicion, on account of the cruel situation in which I am. These generous offers have undeceived Seraphina; and even freed me from the shame of having a stranger witness to the affront put upon my family. Yes, Sir, I acknowledge my fault, and am far from rejecting your assistance. But the death of Don Fernando is not what I ask. Well, madam, replied I, what other services can I do you? Sir, answered Seraphina, the reason of my complaint is this: Don Fernando de Leyva is in love with my sister Julia, whom he accidentally saw at Toledo, where we generally live. About three months ago, he asked her in marriage of the Count de Polan my father, who refused his consent, on account of an old enmity subsisting between our families. My sister is not yet fifteen, and has certainly been so weak as to follow my women's advice, whom Don Fernando has doubtless bribed; and he, informed of our being by ourselves in

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this country-house, has taken the opportunity to run away with Julia. I want therefore to know whither he has carried her, that my father and brother, who have been at Madrid these two months, may take their measures accordingly. For heaven's sake, added she, give yourself the trouble to search the neighbourhood of Toledo, and to make an exact enquiry about the ravisher. My family will be eternally indebted to you for this piece of service.

The lady did not consider that the employment which she prescribed for me was by no means proper for one who could not get out of Castile too soon; but how should she think of that, when I myself forgot it? Delighted with the happiness of finding myself necessary to the most amiable woman in the world, I gladly accepted the commission, and promised to acquit myself with equal diligence and zeal. In effect, I did not defer the execution of my promise even so long as till it was day. I that moment left Seraphina, conjuring her to pardon me for the fright I had occasioned, and assured her she should quickly hear from me. I went out as I had come in; but with my thoughts so full of the lady, that it was not difficult for me to perceive I was already captivated by her beauty. I was the more confirmed in this, by the eagerness I felt in serving her, and the amorous chimeras I formed in my mind. I fancied that Seraphina, though plunged in sorrow, had observed my growing passion, and perhaps with some little pleasure: and I even imagined that if I could bring her any tidings of her sister, and this affair should come to a happy conclusion, the whole would redound to my honour.

Here Don Alphonso interrupted the thread of his story, and said to our venerable host, I beg pardon, father, if, too full of my passion, I enlarge upon cir-

cumstances, which undoubtedly seem tedious to you. No, my son, replied the Anchorite, they are far from being so: I am rather glad I know how far you are taken with this young lady, because I may know how to regulate my advice accordingly.

My head being full of these flattering ideas, resumed the young gentleman, I was too days in search of Julia's ravisher; but notwithstanding all my diligence, I could not discover the least traces of him. Greatly mortified at having reaped no fruit from my researches, I returned to Seraphina, whom I feared I should find in the utmost anxiety: but she was much more tranquil than I could hope, and informed me that she had been more successful than I; that she knew what was become of her sister, having received a letter from Don Fernando himself; wherein he told her, that being privately married to Julia, he had placed her in a convent at Toledo. I have sent this letter to my father, added Seraphina. I hope the affair will terminate in an amicable manner, and that a solemn marriage will soon put an end to the hatred which has so long divided our families.

After the lady had told me this, she made an apology for the trouble she had given me, and the danger to which she had exposed me, by engaging me to pursue a ravisher, without remembering I had told her that I was obliged to fly, on account of an affair of honour. She excused herself for this fault in the most obliging terms; and as I had need of rest, carried me into a parlour, where we sat down together. She had on a night-gown of white taffety with black stripes, with a little hat of the same silk adorned with black feathers, which made me guess that she was a widow; though she appeared so young, that I hardly knew how to think her so. If I longed for an explanation on this

head, she was no less curious to know who I was; accordingly, she begged that I would tell her my name, not doubting, as she said, that by my noble mien, and especially the generous pity I had shewn for her interests, I belonged to some considerable family. I was not a little embarrassed at this question: I blushed, and was confounded; but thinking it less shame to lie than to tell the truth, I answered, I was the son of the Baron de Steinbach, an officer in the German guards. And what is the reason, replied the lady, that you quitted Madrid? I may venture to promise you what interest either my father or brother Don Gaspard have at court: that is the least mark of gratitude I can shew to a gentleman, who to serve me has neglected the care of his own life. I did not scruple in the least to recount to her all the circumstances of my duel. She blamed very much the gentleman whom I had slain, and promised me the intercession of her whole family.

Having satisfied her curiosity, I begged her to gratify mine, and asked her if her faith were engaged or free. Three years ago, replied she, my father obliged me to marry Don Diego de Lara, and I have been a widow fifteen months. What misfortune, madam, said I, deprived you so soon of your husband? I will tell you, Sir, resumed she, in return for the confidence you have reposed in me.

Don Diego de Lara was a very genteel cavalier; but though he had a violent passion for me, and, in order to please me, daily put in practice all that the most tender and passionate lover could think of to make himself agreeable to the woman he loves; in short, though he possessed a thousand good qualities, yet he could not touch my heart. Love is not always the effect of assiduities or well-known merit: but

alas! added she, an utter stranger often enchants us at first sight. Well, it was not in my power to love him: I was more confounded than charmed with the marks of his passion; and if I sometimes in secret accused myself of ingratitude, I likewise found my own situation very unhappy. Unluckily for him, as well as me, his delicacy exceeded his love. He discovered in my actions and discourse my most private thoughts, and dived to the very bottom of my soul. He was every moment complaining of my indifference, and deemed himself the more unhappy in not being able to win my heart, because he very well knew that there was no rival in the way: for I was hardly yet sixteen, and, before he made his addresses to me, he had gained over all my women, who assured him that nobody else had been beforehand with him in my affection. Yes, Seraphina, he would frequently say to me, I wish you had been prepossessed in favour of another, and that were the only cause of your coldness to me. My assiduities and your own virtue would triumph over such a passion; but I despair of making a conquest of your heart, since it remains untouched by all the love I have shewn. Being weary of hearing the same things so often repeated, I told him, that, instead of troubling his repose and mine by too much delicacy, he would do well to leave his grievances to time. And indeed, at my age, I was not very capable of tasting the refinements of such a delicate passion; so that Don Diego ought to have taken my advice. But at a whole year's end, finding himself just where he was at first, he lost all patience, or rather his reason; and pretending to have an affair of consequence at court, he went to Flanders a volunteer, where he soon found in battle that which he went to seek, namely, the end of his life and miseries.

The lady having favoured me with this relation, our discourse turned upon the singular character of her husband. We were interrupted by the arrival of a courier, who delivered to Seraphina a letter from the Count de Polan. She asked my permission to read it, and as she perused it she trembled and grew pale. After having finished it, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, fetched a deep sigh, and her face was in a moment covered with tears. I could not see her grief without uneasiness; and I was greatly disturbed, and as if I had presaged the misfortune that was approaching, felt myself chilled with a mortal dread. Madam, said I with a great deal of emotion, may I ask what new calamity that note acquaints you with? There, Sir, replied Seraphina in a melancholy manner, giving me the letter, do you yourself read what my father writes. Alas! you are but too much concerned in it.

Her words confounded me, and I took the letter trembling, in which were the following words:

“**Y**ESTERDAY your brother Don Gaspard fought a duel in the Prado, in which he received a mortal wound, and died this day. He declared in his last moments, that the gentleman who killed him is son to the Baron de Steinbach, an officer in the German guards. What adds to the misfortune is, that the murderer has escaped me by flight: but let him hide himself where he will, I shall spare no pains to find him out; I am going to write to some governors, who will not fail to apprehend him, if he passes through any town in their jurisdiction; and by letters directed to other people, I hope to block up all the roads he can possibly take.

“The Count de POLAN.”

You may easily judge into what disorder this billet threw me. I for some moments remained without either sense or motion; and even in the midst of this depression, perceiving what a fatal obstruction the death of Don Gaspard would be to my love, was seized with the most violent despair. I threw myself at Seraphina's feet, and presenting her my naked sword, Madam, said I, save your father the trouble of pursuing a man, who may else escape his strictest search. Revenge your brother, by sacrificing his murderer with your own hand. Strike, madam, and let this very sword, which deprived him of life, become fatal to his unfortunate adversary. Sir, answered Seraphina, affected with my behaviour, I loved Don Gaspard; therefore, although you have killed him honourably, and he brought his misfortune upon himself, yet you must needs believe I join with my father in his resentment. Yes, Don Alphonso, I am your enemy, and will act against you every thing that the friendship I owed my brother requires of me: but I will not take advantage of your ill fortune, notwithstanding it delivers you into my hands. The same honour that arms me against you, forbids my revenging myself basely. The rights of hospitality ought to be inviolable, and therefore I will not repay the service you have done me, with the conduct of an assassin. Fly, and if possible escape our pursuit and the rigour of the laws, and save your life from its impending danger.

What, madam, replied I, when you can revenge yourself, do you leave it to the laws, which perhaps will deceive your resentment? Ah, rather pierce the heart of a wretch that does not deserve your pity. No, madam, do not observe so generous a proceeding towards me. You know not who I am: all Madrid believes me to be the son of the Baron de Steinbach, and

I am no other than an unfortunate foundling, whom he has brought up out of compassion: I do not even know who are the authors of my being. No matter; interrupted Seraphina with precipitation, as if these last words had given her new pain, were you the very out-cast of mankind, I would do what honour prescribes. Well then, madam, said I, since not even the death of a brother can provoke you to shed my blood, I will stir up your hatred by a new crime, the audacity of which I hope you will never excuse: I am greatly in love with you. I could not behold your charms without being dazzled with them; and notwithstanding the obscurity of my birth, had entertained the hope of making you mine for ever. I was so far in love, or rather vain, as to flatter myself that heaven, which perhaps favours me by concealing my origin from me, would one day disclose it to me, when I should, without being ashamed, be able to tell my name. Do you therefore still hesitate to punish me, after I have made so bold a confession?

At any other time, replied the lady, I would undoubtedly have been offended at this rash declaration; but I pardon it at present, in consideration of the disorder you are in. Let me therefore once more intreat you, Don Alphonso, added she, letting drop some tears, to leave this place. Fly from a house you have filled with sorrow; for every moment you remain here increases my affliction. I no longer resist, Madam, replied I rising, I must banish myself from you. But do not imagine I shall be so careful of a life which you abhor, as to go and seek an asylum where I can be secure. No, I am entirely devoted to your resentment. I will go to Toledo, wait with impatience for the fate you decree, and by delivering myself up to your pursuits, advance willingly to the period of all my woes.

Thus saying, I withdrew. My horse was brought out for me, and I immediately repaired to Toledo, where I staid eight days; and truly was at so little pains to conceal myself, that I am amazed I was not seized; for I cannot believe that the Count de Polan, whose chief care was to shut up all the passages against me, should have no manner of suspicion of my being at Toledo. In short, I left that city yesterday, where I seemed to be tired of liberty, and without minding where I went, am come to this hermitage, like a man who has nothing to be afraid of. Having thus, father, made you acquainted with the cause of my sorrow, I intreat that you would give me the best advice you can.



CHAP. XI.

Who the venerable Hermit appeared to be, and how Gil Blas discovered that he was among his Acquaintance.

DON Alphonso having finished the melancholy recital of his misfortunes, the aged hermit thus spoke to him: You have been very imprudent, my son, in staying so long at Toledo. Every thing you have related appears to me in a quite different light than it does in your eyes, and your love for Seraphina is mere madness. You must do your utmost to forget that lady, who in all probability will never be yours. Yield therefore, with a good grace, to the obstacles which part you from her, and submit to your stars, which seem to promise you abundance of adventures. You will, undoubtedly, find some other young lady, who will make the same impression upon you, and whose brother you have not killed.

He was going to proceed in his exhortations to Don Alphonso, when we saw another hermit, laden with a wallet well stuffed, enter the hermitage. He was just arrived from making a gathering in the city of Cuença, where he had been very successful. He appeared to be younger than his companion, and wore a red bushy beard. Welcome, brother Anthony, said the reverend hermit to him; what news from town? Bad enough, answered the brother with the red hair, giving him a letter; that billet will inform you. The anchorite, having opened and read it with all the attention it deserved, cried, God be praised! Since the plot is discovered, we must regulate our conduct accordingly. Let us now talk in another style, continued he. You see a man, Signior Don Alphonso, who is, like yourself, the foot-ball of fortune. I am informed from Cuença, which is a town about a league distant from this place, that somebody has given the magistrates a notorious character of me, and that their agents are to set out to-morrow for this hermitage, to lay hold of my person: but they shall not find the hare in the gin. I have before now been in the same perplexity; but, thank God! I have almost always extricated myself like a man of wit and contrivance. I will now shew myself in another shape, for, let me look how I will, I am neither a hermit nor an old man.

After he had thus spoken, he pulled off along robe which he wore, and underneath it appeared a doublet of black serge with slashed sleeves. He then pulled off his cap, untied a packthread which held on his false beard, and, all of a sudden, assumed the figure of a man about twenty-eight or thirty years of age. Brother Anthony, after his example, threw off his hermit's habit, pulled off his beard in the same manner as his companion had done, and took out of an old wooden

box a shabby short cassock, with which he cloathed himself. But imagine how much I was surprized, when, in the person of the old hermit, I recollected Signior Don Raphael; and, in brother Anthony, my most dear and trusty valet Ambrose de Lamela! Bless me! cried I, I find I am among old acquaintance. Indeed you are, Signior Gil Blas, said Raphael smiling; you have here met with a couple of your friends when you least expected it. I confess you have some reason to complain of us; but forget what is past, and thank heaven for our meeting again. Ambrose and myself are entirely at your devotion; and I can tell you, our services are not so contemptible. You must not think us the worst of mankind; we neither assault nor commit murder; and if theft be a crime, necessity excuses the injustice. Associate yourself with us, and lead a rambling life. I can tell you it is very pleasant, when conducted with prudence. Nevertheless, in spite of all our sagacity, the chain of second causes does now and then bring upon us a few unlucky adventures: but, no matter; we enjoy the good with the better relish on that very account. We are accustomed to change of weather, and the vicissitudes of fortune.

Signior cavalier, added the false hermit, addressing himself to Don Alphonso, we make you the same offer, which, considering your present situation, I think you ought not to refuse; for not to mention the affair that obliges you to conceal yourself, I dare say you are not master of a great deal of ready cash. No really, replied Don Alphonso, and that, I own, encreases my chagrin. Well then, replied Don Raphael, join with us: you cannot do better. You shall want nothing; and we will engage to baffle all the search of your enemies. We are so accustomed to rambling, that we know every inch of ground in Spain. We are ac-

quainted with all the woods, mountains, and other places proper for an asylum against the brutality of justice. Don Alphonso thanked them for their good will, and being actually without money or resource, resolved to accompany them. I came to the same determination, because I did not care to leave the young gentleman, for whom I felt in myself a great affection.

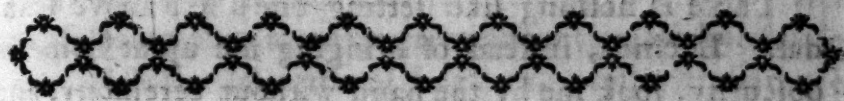
All of us agreeing to go together, and not to part, we began to deliberate whether we should set out immediately, or first have a stroke or two at a bottle full of excellent wine, which brother Anthony had brought the day before from Cuença: but Raphael, as a man of the greatest experience among us, represented that we should in the first place think of our safety; that we had better travel all night, in order to get to a very thick wood between Villardeña and Almodabar, and there we might halt and spend the day in rest and quietness. This opinion was followed, and the false hermits made two bundles of what things and provisions they had there, and put them like panniers upon Don Alphonso's horse. This was done very expeditiously, and we began to be jogging away from the hermitage, leaving as a prey to justice the two hermit-gowns, with the white and red beards, two little beds, a table, a rotten chest, two old matted chairs, and the image of St. Pacomo.

We travelled all night, and began to find ourselves very much fatigued, when at break of day we saw the wood to which we were bound. We penetrated into the thickest part of it, and stopped at a very agreeable place, upon a green spot of grass, surrounded with several towering oaks, whose interwoven branches formed an umbrageous arch, which the sun, in its greatest heat, could not penetrate. Here we unbridle the horse to let him feed, after we had unloaded him.

We sat down together, and took out of brother Anthony's wallet some large pieces of bread, with several bits of roasted meat, and to it we fell, as if for a wager. Nevertheless, in spite of our appetites, we left off eating to embrace the bottle, which never stood still, but passed incessantly round from one to another.

Having finished our repast, Don Raphael said to Don Alphonso, Signior Cavalier, after the confidence you have reposed in me, it is but just that I recount to you the history of my life with the same freedom. It will give me great pleasure, said the young gentleman. And me in particular, cried I; for I am very impatient to know your adventures, which are, I dare say, somewhat extraordinary. So they are, I can promise you, replied Raphael; and I intend to commit them to writing one day. That shall be the amusement of my old age; for I am yet but young, and would swell the volume a little bigger: but at present we are fatigued, let us refresh ourselves with a few hours of sleep. While we three rest, Ambrose will be upon the watch, for fear of some surprize, and then he may sleep in his turn. Though I believe we are very safe in this place, yet it is good to be upon our guard. Thus saying, he stretched himself out upon the grass, Don Alphonso did the same, and Lamela stood centinel.

Don Alphonso, instead of taking his repose, fell to ruminating upon his misfortunes; and I could not close an eye. As for Don Raphael, he soon fell asleep; but awaking an hour after, and seeing us disposed to give attention to him, he said to Lamela, Friend Ambrose, thou mayest now take a comfortable nap. No, no, replied Lamela, I have no inclination to sleep; and though I already know every action of your whole life, yet they are so instructive for people of our profession, that I cannot hear them too often. Don Raphael immediately thus related his adventures.



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GILBLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

The History of Don Raphael.

I AM the son of an actress at Madrid, who was famed for her active qualifications, but much more for her passive. As for my father, I cannot, without presumption, assume any one in particular. A person of quality was in love with Lucinda, for so my mother was called, when I was born; but that epocha would by no means be a convincing proof that he was the author of my birth. A woman of my mother's profession is so little to be trusted, that even while she seems to have all imaginable fondness for one nobleman, she almost always substitutes in his place some other person for his money.

There is nothing like setting one's self above scandal. Lucinda, instead of bringing me up at home in obscurity, took me by the hand without ceremony, and led me to the theatre, without giving herself the least trouble about people's talk. In short, I was her darling, and caressed by all the men that came to her house, so much, that it seemed as if nature pleaded with them in my behalf.

I was allowed to spend the first twelve years of my life in all kinds of idleness. She scarce taught me to read and write; much less informed me of the principles of religion. I learned only to dance, sing, and play on the guitar. This was the sum of my qualifications, when the Marquis de Leganez would needs have me to be a companion to his only son, a youth much about my age. Lucinda readily complied with his request, and then it was I began to have serious thoughts. The young gentleman was no greater a proficient than myself: he did not seem qualified by nature for a philosopher. He could hardly say his Christ-cross row, though he had had a preceptor fifteen months. His other masters succeeded no better: he quite tired them out. They were not permitted to use any severities with him: they had orders to instruct him, but not torment him; and this prohibition, joined to little master's natural indisposition to learning, rendered all their endeavours vain.

But the preceptor invented a pretty expedient to terrify the young lord without contradicting his father's orders. He took a resolution to whip me, forsooth, whenever young Leganez deserved punishment; nor did he fail to do as he resolved. I did not at all relish this expedient of his: therefore I ran away, and complained to my mother of such unjust treatment. Whatever natural tenderness she had for me, she was

so discreet, as not to be overcome by my tears: and considering that it was a great advantage for her son to live with the Marquis of Leganez, presently sent me back again. And now you see me once again in the preceptor's clutches! The good man finding his invention had produced a good effect, continued to flog me instead of my lord, and, in order to make the deeper impression upon his lordship, he laid it upon my worship thick and threefold. I was sure to pay every day for young Leganez; and I can safely say my young master did not learn one letter of the alphabet but what cost me a hundred lashes at the least; judge you how much his grammar cost me.

Whipping was not the only disagreeable thing I was to endure in this family: as I was known to every body, the meanest of the servants, the very scullions, reproached me with my birth. This so vexed me, that one day I ran away with what ready money I met with belonging to the preceptor, which might amount to a hundred and fifty ducats: and thus I revenged myself for the undeserved stripes he had given me. This trick, though it was the first I ever tried my hand at, I managed with a great deal of subtilty; and had the cunning to elude the strict search that was made for me two days running. I quitted Madrid, and went to Toledo, without being stopped by any body.

I was then near fifteen years of age. O what pleasure it is to be, at that age, independent, lord of one's self, accountable to none, like the first man in paradise alone! I soon contracted acquaintance with some young fellows, who polished me up, and soon helped me off with my ducats. I afterwards associated myself with knights of the post, who so well cultivated my happy disposition, that in a little time I was at the head of that noble order. At the end of five years I was seiz-

ed with a desire to travel: I took leave of my comrades, and being desirous to begin my travels through Estremadura, I set my face towards Alcantara; but ere I got thither, an opportunity offered of exercising my talents, and I did not let it escape. Being a-foot, and loaded too with a very heavy knapsack, I stopt every now and then to rest me under the trees, which invited me with their shady boughs at some little distance from the highway.

I found two young lads conversing very pleasantly together in one of these resting places, and taking the fresh air upon the green grass. I courteously saluted them, and entered into discourse with them, which they did not seem at all displeased with. The oldest of the two was not fifteen. They were very frank with me: Signior Cavalier, said the youngest to me, we are sons of two wealthy citizens in Placentia, and being very desirous to see the kingdom of Portugal, to satisfy our curiosity, have made bold each of us to take a hundred pistoles from our fathers. Though we go a-foot, this money will carry us a great way, as we shall manage it. What is your opinion of this matter? If I had as much, said I, I should know no end of my travels. I would visit every quarter of the world. The duce! two hundred pistoles! Why, it is an immense sum of money, and you will never be able to spend it. If it be agreeable to you, gentlemen, adds I, I will do myself the honour to accompany you as far as the city of Almeria, where I am going to take possession of the estate of an uncle who went and settled there about twenty years since.

The young cits told me they would be very glad of my company. Therefore when we had rested ourselves a little, we directed our march to Alcantara, whither we arrived a good while before night, and

went to a very good inn. We asked for a room, and they shewed us one wherein was a closet which had a lock and key to it. We ordered supper; and while it was getting ready, I proposed to my comrades to go take a little walk in the town. They readily agreed. We locked up our knapsacks in the closet, the key of which one of the cits put in his pocket, and out we went. We looked into several of the churches, and while we were in the greatest, I pretended suddenly to have forgot an affair of consequence, and said, Gentlemen, I have this moment recollected that a friend of mine of Toledo charged me to deliver a certain message to a tradesman that lives near this church. I beg you would wait for me here. I will be back in a moment. With this I left them. I ran to the inn, flew to the closet, forced open the lock, and searching in the knapsacks of my young sparks, found all their pistoles. Poor souls! I did not leave them one to pay for their lodging. After this, I quitted the town as fast as possible, and took the road to Merida, without troubling myself any farther about them.

This adventure enabled me to travel very agreeably. Though young, I found myself capable of conducting myself prudently. I may say, that for my age I was as apt as any body. Having resolved to buy a mule, I put my resolution in practice at the next village. I also turned my knapsack into a portmanteau, and began to take a little more upon me. The third day I overtook a man who was singing vespers as loud as he could roar, on the highway. I guessed him presently to be a chantor, and thereupon said to him: Signior Bachelor, you sing well, I find your heart goes with your business. Signior, replied he, I am a chantor at your service, and amuse myself with exercising my voice, for fear of losing it.

In this manner we entered into conversation. I soon perceived that I was got into company with a very witty fellow, and a boon companion I warrant him. He was about four or five and twenty. He being a-foot, I rid but slowly, that I might have the pleasure of talking with him. Among other things, the discourse turned upon Toledo. I know that city perfectly well, said the chantor; I have lived there a considerable time, and I have some good hearty friends there too. In what part of Toledo did you live? interrupted I. In the New-street, answered he. I lodged with Don Vincent de Buena Garra, Don Matthias de Cordel, and two or three other honest cavaliers. We slept, we eat together, and passed away the time very agreeably. These words surprised me, for it must be observed, that these gentlemen were the very sharpers I had kept company with at Toledo. Signior Chantor, cried I, these very gentlemen are all of my acquaintance, and I myself have lived with them in the New-street. I understand you, replied he, smiling; I suppose then that you are entered in the company since I left it, that is three years ago. Yes, replied I, I have just left those cavaliers, because I have a mighty itch for travelling. I intend to make the tour of all Spain, knowing that I shall be a greater master of my business when I have more experience. Certainly, said he, the best way to perfect one's self, is to travel. That is the reason too, why I left Toledo, though I spent my time there very agreeably. I thank Heaven, continued he, for throwing in my way a knight of my own order, when I least expected it. Let us join our forces, and travel together: let us make irruptions into the purses of our neighbours, and lay hold of all occasions that offer, to exercise our skill.

He made this proposal so heartily, and with so good a grace, that I immediately accepted it. He won my confidence entirely, by giving me his, and we unbosomed ourselves to one another. I gave him an account of my adventures, and he frankly told me his: he informed me that he was just come from Portalegro, from whence a piece of knavery, which unluckily happened to be discovered, obliged him to remove with precipitation, in the dress he now wore. After he had given me a full relation of his affairs, we resolved to go try our fortune at Merida, there give some proof of our skill, and then remove elsewhere. From that moment our goods became common between us both. It is true, Moralez (so my companion was called) was in no very flowing circumstances. His whole fortune consisted of five or six ducats, and a few things which he carried in a wallet; but if I was richer than himself in ready money, he was more consummate than I in the art of sharpening. We mounted my mule by turns, and arrived in this manner at Merida.

We stopt at an inn in the suburbs, where my comrade took out of his wallet a suit of cloaths; which he had no sooner put on, than we went to take a turn through the town, and to look out for an opportunity of going to work. We took notice of every thing we saw. Homer would have compared us to two kites prying about in the fields for birds which they might make a prey of. In short, we begged Fortune to give us some opportunity of employing our industry; when suddenly we spied in the street an old gray-headed gentleman, who was fighting sword in hand with three men that pushed hard at him. This unequal combat shocked us, and as I naturally loved fighting, I flew to the assistance of the old man. Moralez following my

example, we attacked the cavalier's three adversaries, and soon obliged them to run for it.

The old man gratefully thanked us. We are very glad, said I, that we were here so luckily as to help you: but pray let us know at least whom we have been so fortunate as to serve, and pray tell us why those three men would have murdered you? Gentleman, replied he, I am too much obliged to you to refuse to satisfy your curiosity. My name is Jerome de Moyadas, and I live on my fortune in this city. One of those assassins is enamoured with my daughter. He asked her of me a few days ago, and because I refused him my consent, he thus attacked me in order to be revenged. May one be so bold as to inquire, replied I, what was the reason of your refusing your consent to this cavalier? I will tell you, said he. I had a brother a merchant in this city, whose name was Austin. About two months ago being at Calatrava, he lodged in the house of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla, his correspondent. They were intimate friends; and my brother, to strengthen their friendship more than ever, promised Florentina, my only daughter, in marriage to his correspondent's son, not doubting but that he had credit enough with me to perform his promise. And indeed my brother being returned to Merida, had no sooner named this match to me, than for his sake I agreed to it. He sent Florentina's picture to Calatrava; but alas! he had not the pleasure of finishing the work he had begun; he died about three weeks ago. Upon his death-bed he conjured me not to dispose of my daughter to any one but the son of his correspondent. I promised him I would not; and this is the reason why I would not give Florentina to the cavalier who just now assaulted me, although he is a very advantageous match. My word is my bond. I expect the

son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla here every moment, that he may have my daughter, though I never saw him more than his father. I hope you will excuse the tediousness of this relation, continued Jerome de Moyadas, with which I should not have troubled you, if you had not desired it.

I paid great attention to what he said, and having hit upon a design which I was mightily tickled with, I affected a great surprize, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and then turning to the old man, I said in a pathetic tone: Ah! Signior de Moyadas, is it possible that at my first arrival at Merida, I should be so happy as to save my father-in-law's life? These words strangely surprized the old man, and Moralez no less, who shewed by his countenance, that he thought me a very extraordinary fellow. What do I hear? replied the senior, how! are you the son of my brother's correspondent? Yes, answered I very impudently, and throwing my arms about his neck, I am the happy mortal for whom the amiable Florentina is destined. But before I shew the joy it gives me to be allied to your family, allow me to shed in your bosom the tears which the memory of your brother Austin brings afresh to my eyes. I should be the most ungrateful of men, if I were not deeply concerned for the death of a man to whom I owe all the happiness of my life. So saying, I again embraced the good man, and covered my eyes with my hand, on pretence of wiping away my tears. Moralez, who soon conceived the advantage we might make of this business, did not fail to second me. He made as if he were my valet, and began to grieve with me for the death of Signior Austin. Ah! Signior Jerome, cried he, what a loss have you suffered in your brother's death! the honestest man! the very phoenix of commerce, a disinterested merchant, an honest mer-

chant, a merchant that has left few behind him that can come up with him.

The man we had to deal with was simple and credulous; so far from suspecting any cheat, he put a helping hand to the plot. Why, said he, did not you come directly to my house? I wonder you would go lodge in an inn. What need was there of ceremony between us two? Sir, said Moralez, taking upon himself to speak for me, my master hates to be rude. Besides, he is very excusable for not caring to be seen by you in his present condition: we were robbed by the way, and all our things in general were taken from us. My man tells you nothing but the truth, Signior de Moyadas, interrupted I. This accident was the reason I did not come to your house. I durst not appear in this garb before a mistress who has not yet seen me, and therefore I waited for the return of a servant whom I have sent to Calatrava. Pugh! says the old man, this ought not to have prevented you from coming to stay at my house; but I am resolved now not to go home without you.

Thus saying, the old man carried me to his house; and in the way thither we talked of the pretended robbery I had met with. I told him that what gave me the greatest concern was my having lost Florentina's picture among the rest of my things. Upon this the good man said laughing, That this loss was easily repaired, and that the original was better than the copy. As soon as we came to his house, he called his daughter, who was not above sixteen, and was very beautiful. You see the wife, said he, that my brother promised you. Ah, Signior! cried I, with a passionate air, you have no occasion to tell me that this is the lovely Florentina. That charming face is deeply engraved in my memory, but much more in my

heart. If the picture I have lost, which was only a weak sketch of such perfection, could inflame me so violently, judge what transports I must feel now! You flatter me too much, said Florentina; neither am I vain enough to imagine I deserve it. Well, I will leave you to your compliments, interrupted the father. At the same time he left me alone with his daughter, and taking Moralez aside: Friend, said he, you have lost all your baggage you tell me; and your money without doubt among the rest? Yes, Sir, replied my comrade, a vast croud of banditti set upon us near Castil Blazo, and left us nothing but the cloaths upon our backs; but we shall soon receive some bills of exchange, which will put every thing to rights again.

But till these bills arrive, answered the old man, pulling out his purse, here is an hundred pistoles for you. Oh! Sir, cried Moralez, my master would not accept them. You do not know him, I find. No, no, he is very cautious in cash-affairs. He is none of your young heirs, that, provided they have but money, do not care how they come by it. He does not love to run in debt. He would rather beg alms than borrow a farthing. I am glad to hear it, said the good man: I esteem him the more for that. I hate to see people load themselves with debts; but your quality will do it, and so it is in vain to talk. I will not force your master in any thing against his inclinations; if, as you say, it is an affront to offer him money, we must be silent upon that head. With this he was putting up his purse into his pocket, but my companion held his arm. Stay, Signior de Moyadas, said he, whatever aversion my master may have for borrowing I do not despair prevailing upon him to accept of your hundred pistoles. He is not so ceremonious among his own family. Nay, of his father he can beg what

money he want with a good grace. He knows how to make distinctions; and ought to look upon you, Sir, as a second father.

By this means Moralez got possession of the old man's purse, who came back to us, and found his daughter and myself engaged in compliments. He interrupted us, and telling Florentina the obligations he lay under to me, returned me thanks in terms which shewed what a grateful sense he had of it. I laid hold of this opportunity, and told him that the greatest mark of acknowledgment he could shew me, was to hasten my marriage with his daughter. He yielded kindly to my impatience; and assured me that in three days at farthest I should be Florentina's husband, and that instead of the six thousand ducats he had promised for her portion, he would give me ten, as a proof of his being deeply affected with the services I had done him.

Thus Moralez and I were treated at the good man's house like lords, and had besides the agreeable prospect of fingering ten thousand ducats, with which we proposed to make a decampment from Merida as fast as possible. But a degree of fear disturbed this joy in some measure; we were apprehensive, lest before the three days were at an end, the true son of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla should come and cross all our good fortune. This fear was not ill grounded. The very next day a sort of a peasant, loaded with a portmanteau, came to Moyadas's house. I was not then at home, but my comrade was. Signior, said the peasant to the old man, I belong to the gentleman of Calatrava, who is to be your son-in-law, I mean Signior Pedro de Menbrilla. We are just now arrived. He will be here in a moment. I came before to give you notice. He had hardly done speaking when his

master appeared: which very much surpris'd the old man, and put poor Moralez to a nonplus.

Pedro was a very genteel young fellow. He address'd his speech to the father of Florentina: but the honest citizen did not give him time to finish what he had begun to say; he turned to my companion, Prithee, now, says he, what does all this mean? Then Moralez, who had as good a stock of impudence as any man, put on a confident look, and said to the old gentleman: Sir, these two fellows belong to the gang of thieves that robbed us upon the road. I know them again perfectly well, particularly him who has the impudence to call himself the son of Signior Juan Velez de la Menbrilla. The honest citizen believed Moralez, and being persuaded that these new-comers were cheats, he said to them, Faith, Gentlemen, you are come to late: Pedro de Menbrilla is here before you. He has lodged in my house ever since yesterday. Take care what you say, replied the young man of Calatrava. That Pedro you have got in your family must be some impostor. Juan Velez de la Menbrilla has no son but myself. You may e'en march off, replied the old man, I know well enough who you are: Do not you recollect this man's face here, and have you forgot that you robbed his master? If it were not in your house, said Pedro, I would punish the insolence of that cheat, who has the presumption to call me a thief. He may thank your presence for restraining my anger. Signior, continued he, you are imposed upon; I am the young man to whom your brother Austin promised Florentina. If you please, I shall shew you all the letters he wrote to my father about this match. Will you not believe it when I shew you your daughter's picture, which he sent me a little before he expired?

No, interrupted the old citizen, I care no more for the picture than I do for the letters; I know very well in what manner they fell into your hands, and therefore I advise you as a friend to be trooping from Merida as soon as you can. This is too much, interrupted the young cavalier in his turn. I will not suffer myself to be robbed of my good name with impunity, and to be treated as a highwayman. I am acquainted with some persons in this town. I will go and return with them to confound this impostor, who has prejudiced you against me. Having said this, he and his servant retired, and Moralez remained master of the field. Nay, this accident made Jerome de Moyadas resolve to conclude the marriage that very day. He went out therefore immediately to give orders about what was necessary for that purpose.

Though my comrade was very well pleased to see Florentina's father so favourably disposed to our advantage, yet he was not perfectly easy. He was apprehensive of what Pedro would do, and wished impatiently for my return, to communicate what had happened. I found him very thoughtful. What is the matter? said I. You seem melancholy. If I am, answered he, it is not without reason. At the same time he informed me of every thing that had happened. Now do you judge, added he, whether or no I have cause to muse. It is your rash project has thrown us into this dilemma. The enterprize, I own, was noble, and would have made your name immortal, had it succeeded; but now in all appearance it will have a very bad catastrophe; and to prevent any further confusion, I think we cannot do better than take to our heels, with the feather which we have already plucked out of the old man's wing.

Moralez, replied I, you are very soon disheartned.

You do no great honour to Don Matthias de Cordel, and the other cavaliers with whom you lived at Toledo. When one has served a prenticeship under such great men, one ought not to be so easily alarmed. As for me who intend to follow the steps of those heroes, and shew myself a worthy disciple, the obstacle which you are so terrified at, makes me only the more resolute; and I am fully determined to remove it. If you accomplish that, said my companion, I will prefer you to all the great men in Plutarch.

Just as Moralez had done speaking, Jerome de Moyadas entering, said to me, You shall be my son-in-law this very night; your servant I suppose has told you what has happened. Are not you astonished at the rogue's impudence, to think to persuade me he was the son of my brother's correspondent? Signior, replied I in a sorrowful tone, and with the most ingenuous air I could possibly put on, I find I am not qualified to carry on a piece of treachery. I am resolved to confess all to you. I am not the son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla. Can I believe what I hear? interrupted the old man very much surprised: What, are not you the young man to whom my brother gave a——Pray, Sir, be so good as to hear me out, interrupted I in my turn. I have been eight days in love with your daughter; which has kept me at Merida. Yesterday, after having saved your life, I was going to demand her of you in marriage, when you stopped my mouth by telling me, that she was destined for another. You told me that your brother upon his death-bed conjured you to give her to Pedro de la Menbrilla, that you had promised you would, and that your word was your bond. This, I own, overwhelmed me, but love inspired me with the stratagem which I put in practice. It is true, I could not without uneasiness impose this upon you;

but I hoped that you would forgive me when I discovered to you the whole matter of fact, and informed you moreover, that I am an Italian prince travelling incog. My father is Sovereign of certain valleys situated between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy. I imagined you would be agreeably surprised when I revealed my birth to you, and I meant to keep it in reserve as a particular pleasure to declare it to Florentina after our marriage. But heaven, continued I in another tone, would not indulge me in so much joy. Pedro de la Menbrilla appears. I must now restore him his name, let the restitution cost me ever so much. Your promise binds you to make him your son-in-law; you are obliged to prefer him to me, without having any regard to my rank, or compassion for the cruel situation to which you will thereby reduce me. I will not suggest to you that your brother was only your daughter's uncle; that you are her father, and that it is more just you should acquit yourself of the obligation you have to me, than be so nicely scrupulous in keeping a verbal engagement, which is but slightly binding.

More just! cried Jerome de Moyadas; ay, a thousand times, I shall not hesitate long between you and Pedro de la Menbrilla. If my brother Austlin himself were alive, I am sure he would not blame me for giving the preference to one who has saved my life, and who, though a prince, does not disdain my alliance. I must be my own enemy, a mere fool, if I did not give you my daughter, and even press the celebration of the marriage. Yet, Signior, replied I, do nothing hastily, I would have you consult your own interest, and notwithstanding the nobility of my blood, — You jest sure, interrupted he: ought I to hesitate a moment? No, my prince; I most humbly be-

seech you to honour the happy Florentina with your hand this very night. Well then, said I, be it so; do you yourself go carry her the news, and inform her of her glorious fate.

While the good man ran to tell his daughter that she had made the conquest of a prince, Moralez, who had heard all this conversation, fell upon his knees before me, and said: Monsieur the Italian Prince, son of the Sovereign of the valleys situated between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy, give me leave to throw myself at your Highness's feet, as a testimony of my amazement. Upon the word of a knave, I look upon you as a prodigy. I used to believe myself the top of my profession; but I own I must strike to you, though you have less experience than myself. Your fears are dispelled then, are they? said I. Quite and clean, answered he, I am no longer afraid of Signior Pedro. Let him come as soon as he chuses. Thus Moralez and I thought ourselves right in our stirrups. We began to lay out the course we should take with the portion, of which we imagined ourselves as secure as if it had been in our pockets. But alas! it was not yet come to that, and the end of this adventure did not prove so successful as we expected.

The young gentleman of Calatrava soon returned, accompanied with two citizens, and an alguazil, as venerable for his mustachios and the blackness of his beard, as for the dignity of his office. Florentina's father was with us. Signior de Moyadas, says Pedro, I have brought hither these three honest gentlemen, who know me, and can tell you who I am. Ay, that we can, cried the alguazil. I do hereby certify to all whom it may concern, that I know you. Your name is Pedro, and you are the only son of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla. Whoever maintains the con-

trary, is an impostor. I believe you, Signior Alguazil, says Jerome de Moyadas; I do not at all doubt your testimony, nor that of these gentlemen who are with you. I am fully convinced that the young cavalier who conducted you hither is the only son of my brother's correspondent. But that does not signify, I have at present altered my resolution of giving him my daughter.

Oh, that is another affair, says the alguazil. All I come for, is to inform you that I know this young gentleman. You are master of your own daughter, and nobody can compel you to dispose of her contrary to your inclinations. Neither will I pretend to it, interrupted Pedro. But Signior de Moyadas will give me leave to ask him, why he has changed his sentiments? Has he any thing to object against me? Since I must give up the pleasing hopes of being his son-in-law, at least I shall be glad to hear that I have not lost them by my misbehaviour. I have nothing to object against you, replied the old man; nay, which is more, I am extremely sorry that I find myself under a necessity of breaking my word with you; and beg you would forgive me. I dare say you have too much generosity in you to take it ill that I should prefer to you a rival who has saved my life. This is the gentleman, said he, shewing me to the company, who did me that good office; and for my further excuse know, that he is an Italian prince.

These last words struck Pedro dumb and confounded. The two citizens stared, but the alguazil, always accustomed to look upon the worst side of every thing, suspected this wonderful adventure to be some cheat that might turn out to his advantage. He viewed me very attentively; and as my features, which he was unacquainted with, frustrated his good intentions, he

tell to examine the face of my companion: unluckily for my Highness, he recollected Morales, and remembering to have seen him in the prisons of Ciudad Real, Ha! ha! cried he, here is one of my customers. This gentleman I am perfectly well acquainted with, and let me tell you, he is one of the most notorious sharpers in all the kingdoms and principalities of Spain. Not too fast, good Mr. Alguazil, says Jerome de Moyadas; this man, whom you paint so disadvantageously, is a servant of the Prince's. Very well, replied the alguazil. That is what I intend to steer my course by. I judge of the master by the man. I don't doubt but these sparks are two cheats that have joined their forces to impose upon you. I am not often deceived in these affairs: and to shew that these wags are what I tell you, I will carry them immediately to goal. They shall have a little conversation with Signior Corregidor; and afterwards a few jerks to inculcate what instructions he may give them. Hold, hold, cried the old man. Don't let us push matters so far. You officers of justice don't care what you do, nor whom you abuse. Pray may not the servant be a knave without the master's being one too? Is it a new thing to see a rogue in the service of a prince? I think the man is mad, with his princes, interrupted the alguazil. This fellow I dare swear is a knight of the post, and I arrest him in the king's name, and his comrade too. I have twenty serjeants at the door, that shall drag them to prison, if they refuse to go with a good grace. Come, my Lord, let us be jogging.

These words confounded us, and our concern made Jerome begin to suspect us, or rather entirely convinced him what we were. He then believed that our design was to trick him. However, he behaved himself very generously upon this occasion: Mr. Algua-

zil, says he, your suspicions may yet be false; though perhaps they are but too true. Be that as it will, let us dive no farther into the affair. Let these two young men go about their business: It is a favour I ask, in order to acquit myself of the obligation I lie under to them. If I did my duty strictly, answered the alguazil, I should put these gentlemen in prison without giving any heed to what you say: but for your sake I will relax a little, upon condition that they leave the town immediately; for if I find them here to-morrow, they shall see what will become of them.

When Moralez and I understood we were free, we began to take heart a little. We would have spoken boldly, and averred that we were men of honour; but the alguazil struck us dumb with a fierce look. It is strange what an ascendant those people have over us. We were forced therefore to abandon Florentina and her portion to Pedro de la Menbrilla, who without doubt became the son-in-law of Jerome de Moyadas. I retired with my comrade. We took our way to Truxilla, with the consolation, however, of having got a hundred pistoles by the adventure. An hour before night, as we were going by a little village, designing to walk a little farther before we halted, we spied an inn of a very good appearance for such a place as that, and the host and hostess sitting at the door upon long stones. The host, an old fat fellow, was fumbling upon a wretched guitar to divert his wife, who seemed to listen to his music with pleasure. Gentlemen, cried the host when he saw that we passed by his house, I advise you to stop where you are. It is three weary leagues to the very next village, and I can tell you, you will not be half so well accommodated there as in my house. Be advised and come in. You shall be well used, and at a reasonable rate. We were persuaded to do so,

and going up to the host and hostess, we saluted them, and having sat down by them, began all four of us to talk of indifferent subjects. The host said he was an officer of the holy brotherhood, and the hostess was a fat merry woman, who seemed to understand how to make the best of her market.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of twelve or fifteen cavaliers mounted some upon mules and some upon horses, and followed by thirty mules laden with bales. A brave troop! my lads, cried the host at the sight of so many people: Where shall I find lodging for them all? In an instant the village was filled with men and beasts. By good luck there was near the inn a large barn, in which they put the pack-mules and their lading. The mules and horses of the cavaliers were crowded in other places. As for the men, they did not take so much care about getting beds, as what supper they should have. The host, hostess, and a young maid of theirs went to work about it tightly. They fell without mercy upon all the poultry in the yard, which, with some fricassée of rabbits and cats, and a plentiful dish of soup made of mutton and cabbage, furnished victuals enough for the whole company.

Moralez and I looked at these cavaliers, who frequently eyed us also. At last we fell into conversation, and we told them, that if it was agreeable we would sup with them. They answered that we would do them great pleasure. Down therefore we sat. One there was among them that seemed to be the commander, and to whom the others, though they all seemed to be very free, shewed some deference. This man indeed carried it above them all. He talked loud, and sometimes contradicted the opinions of the rest, who, far from replying in the same manner to him, seemed

to have respect to what he said. The discourse happened to fall upon Andalusia; and as Moralez praised Seville, the man I just now spoke of said to him: Signior Cavalier, I was born in the very town you commend, at least in the neighbourhood of it, for the town de Mayrena is the place of my nativity. I can say the same thing, answered my companion. I am also of Mayrena, and I am sure then your parents cannot be unknown to me. Whose son are you? The son of an honest notary, replied the cavalier, called Martin Moralez. Faith, odd enough! cried my comrade with emotion; you are then my elder brother Manuel Moralez! The same, said the other; and I suppose you are my younger brother Lewis, whom I left in the cradle when I quitted my father's house? Right, quoth my comrade. At these words they both got up, and embraced one another very affectionately. Afterwards Signior Manuel said to the company: Gentlemen, this event is a perfect miracle! chance throws in my way a brother whom I have not seen these twenty years. Allow me to present him to you. Then all the cavaliers, who out of complaisance were standing, saluted young Moralez, and loaded him with embraces. After this, we sat down again to table, where we continued all night, without going to bed. The two brothers sat next to one another, and talked to themselves of their family, while the other guests drank and made merry.

Lewis had a great deal of talk with Manuel, and afterwards taking me aside he said to me: All those cavaliers are domestics of the Count de Montanos, whom the King has lately appointed viceroy of Majorca. They are convoying their master's equipage to Alicant, where they are to take shipping. My brother, who is become that nobleman's steward, has of-

ferred to take me along with him, and upon my being unwilling to leave you, he told me that if you would accompany us, he would take care to get you some good employment. My dear friend, continued he, I would not have you despise this opportunity. Let us go to the island of Majorca together. If we find it agreeable, we will stay there; if not, we can return to Spain, and be just where we were.

I gladly embraced the proposal. Young Morales and myself put ourselves into the list of the Count's officers, and we set out with him from the inn before the sun was up. We came by long stages to the city of Alicant, where I bought a guitar, and took off a very handsome suit of cloaths, before our embarkation. My thoughts ran upon nothing but the island of Majorca, and Lewis Morales was in the same disposition. We now seemed to have renounced all manner of sharpening. To speak the truth, we had a mind to keep our credit among these cavaliers, and had put a check upon the natural bent of our genius. At length we went joyfully on shipboard, and flattered ourselves with the hopes of being at Majorca in a very little time; but we were hardly got out of the gulf of Alicant, when a dreadful storm suddenly arose. I have here a rare opportunity to make a florid description of a tempest; to paint the air all in a flame; to make the thunder grumble, the winds rattle, the waves roar, and so forth: but skipping over all those flowers of rhetoric, I shall only tell you that the hurricane was violent, and obliged us to bear away for the island de la Cabrera. It is a small place, strengthened with a little fortress, which was then garrisoned by five or six soldiers, and an officer, who received us very hospitably.

As we were to spend some days here to mend our sails and tackle, we used several sorts of recreations to

pass away the time. Every one followed his own inclinations: some played at primero, and others amused themselves other ways; I for my part used to walk about in the island with those among our cavaliers that loved walking. We jumped from rock to rock, for the ground was very uneven, hardly any thing but stones to be seen, and very little earth in it. One day, as we were viewing this dismal place, and reflecting upon the caprice of nature, who shews herself fruitful or barren where she pleases, our smelling faculty was all of a sudden seized with a very agreeable odour. We turned towards the east, from whence this smell came, and were surprised to see in the middle of some rocks, a large spot of earth covered with fine grass, and surrounded with honeysuckles more beautiful and sweet even than those which grow in Andalusia. We immediately directed our steps to those charming bushes which perfumed the air all around, and we found they grew about the mouth of a very deep cave. This place was broad, and not very dark. We went down to the very bottom of it by stone steps, which at each end were adorned with flowers, and which formed a sort of natural stair-case. When we were below, we saw serpentina, upon a sand more yellow than gold, several little streams produced by the drops of water which the rocks incessantly distilled into the cave, and which lost themselves in the earth. The water looked so clear, that we drank of it, and found it so fresh that we resolved to return again next day, and to bring with us some bottles of wine, being persuaded that we should empty them very agreeably in this delightful place.

We could not leave this charming retreat without reluctance, and when we went back to the fort, we did not fail to boast to our companions of our discovery; but the commandant told us, that he would advise us

as a friend, to return no more to the cave we were so delighted with. For what reason? said I, is there any danger in it? A great deal, replied he. The corsairs of Algier and Tripoli frequently land in this island, and go to that spring to take in fresh water. They one day surpris'd two soldiers of my garrison in that place, whom they made slaves. The officer, though he spoke very seriously, could not persuade us. We thought he did but jest, and so the very next day I returned to the cave with three of my companions. We went without the least fire-arm, to let them see we dreaded nothing. Young Moralez would not be of the party, but chose to stay with his brother in the fort.

We descended to the bottom of the cave, as we had done before, and cooled some bottles of wine, which we had brought with us, in the rivulets. While we were drinking deliciously, playing upon the guitar, and conversing jovially, we saw at the mouth of the cave several men appear with thick mustachios, Turkish dresses, and turbans. We imagined that some of our companions, and the captain of the fort, had disguised themselves in that manner to surprise us. In this thought we fell a laughing at them, and suffered ten of them to come down, without thinking of defending ourselves. We were presently undeceived to our sorrow, and we found that we were fallen into the clutches of a pirate, who came with his men to seize us: Yield, you dogs, cried he to us, in the Castilian language, or you shall all be slain this moment. With that they clapt their carabines to our breasts, and we should have undergone a fine discharge, if we had made the least resistance. We chose slavery rather than death, and gave our swords to the corsair, who loaded us with chains, and carried us to his ship, which was at no great distance. Then setting sail, we steered towards Algier.

Thus were we punished for neglecting the advice the captain of the garrison had given us. The first thing the pirate did was to rifle us of our money. A rare windfall for him! The two hundred pistoles taken from the young cits of Placentia, the hundred which Moralez had received of Jerome de Moyadas, and which I unluckily had about me; all this went at one sweep. My companions too had their purses very well filled. In short, it was a plentiful harvest for the pirate, who was overjoyed at his good luck; and the brute, not satisfied with our plunder, insulted us with raileries, which would not have been very biting, but for the necessity we lay under of bearing them. After a thousand pitiful jokes, he ordered the bottles of wine we had cooled in the fountain, and which his men had been very careful to bring into captivity with us, to be brought to him, and began to empty them with his sailors, drinking to our healths by way of derision.

The countenances of my companions all this while shewed their vexation and sorrow. They were the more mortified with their slavery, because they had formed the most delightful idea of their voyage to the island of Majorca, where they thought they should live like princes. For my part, I had fortitude enough to project a plan of conduct for myself, and therefore I began to talk with the waggish corsair. I jested with him with a very unconcerned air, which pleased him. Young man, said he, I love people of your temper. And in the main, it is better to arm one's self with patience, and sail with the stream, than stand fighting and groaning, which will do no good. Come, play us a little tune, continued he, observing that I had a guitar with me. Let us hear what thou canst do. I obeyed the moment he had ordered my arms to be unchained, and began to strike my guitar in such a manner as won me his ap-

plause. Indeed, I had learned under the best master in all Madrid, and played tolerably well on that instrument. I sung him an air too, and my voice gave no less satisfaction. All the Turks in the ship, by their gestures, shewed the delight I gave them; by which I found they had no great skill in music. The pirate whispered to me, that I should be no unhappy slave, and that I might be sure my talents would procure me an employment that would make my captivity not too rigorous.

These words pleased me much; but yet I could not help being a little uneasy at seeing myself in so mean a condition as to want such an employment. When we arrived at the port of Algier, we found a vast concourse of people gathered together to receive us; and we were no sooner landed, than they shouted for joy. Besides, the air resounded with the confused noise of trumpets, Morisco flutes, and other instruments used in that country, which formed but an odd kind of concert. The cause of all this rejoicing was a false report that had been spread in the city, importing, that the Renegade Mehemet, which was the name of our pirate, had been slain in the attack of a great Genoese ship; so that all his friends, when they heard of his return, strove who should receive him with the most joy.

No sooner were we landed than we were carried to the palace of the Bashaw Solyman, where a Christian secretary examining us apart, asked us our names, our ages, our country, our religion, and qualifications. Then Mehemet shewing me to the Bashaw, praised my voice to the skies, and told him, that I played delightfully upon the guitar. This was enough to make Solyman chuse me for his service. I was detained therefore in his seraglio. The other captives were carried to a public market, and sold according to custom. What

Mehemet had foretold to me in the ship, did really come to pass. My condition was very happy. I was not delivered over to the keepers of the prisons, nor put to any hard labour. Solyman Bashaw caused me to be put into a particular place with five or six slaves of quality, who were to be speedily ransomed, and whose tasks were far from being painful. My business was to water the orange-trees and flowers in the garden. I could not have had a more pleasing employment.

Solyman was about forty years old, well shaped, and very polite, for a Turk. His favourite mistress was a Cachemirian woman, who had gained an absolute dominion over him by her wit and beauty. He loved her even to adoration. He every day treated her with some diversion or other; at one time a concert of voices and instruments, and at another a play, after the Turkish manner; that is, dramatic poems, wherein the rules of modesty and decency are as little regarded as those of Aristotle. The favourite, whose name was Farrukhnaz, was very fond of these shows; so much, that sometimes she made her own women act Arabian pieces before the Bashaw. She herself would play a part in them, and charm all the spectators by the gracefulness and vivacity with which she performed them. One day when I was among the musicians at one of these representations, Solyman ordered me to play upon my guitar, and sing alone between the acts. I had the happiness to please. Every body applauded me, and the favourite seemed to regard me with no unkind eye.

The next day, as I was watering my orange-trees in the garden, there passed by me an eunuch, who, without stopping to speak to me, dropt a billet at my feet. I took it up in a confusion mixed with hope and fear. I laid myself flat upon the ground, that I might

not be seen from the windows of the seraglio, and hiding myself behind some orange-pots, opened the note. I found in it a valuable diamond ring, and these words in good Spanish:

“ YOUNG Christian, thank heaven for thy captivity. Love and fortune will make thee happy ; love, if thou art sensible of the charms of a handsome lady ; and fortune, if thou hast courage enough to hold the greatest dangers at defiance.”

I did not doubt in the least that the letter came from the favourite sultana ; the style and the diamond persuaded me that it must be so. Besides that I am not naturally inclined to be timorous, the vanity of being in the good graces of the mistress of so great a man, and above all, the hopes of getting four times as much money from her as was necessary to pay for my ransom, made me resolve to try this adventure, whatever dangers might attend it. I went on with my work, studying how I should get into Farrukhnaz's apartment, or rather waiting till she herself should direct me ; for I concluded that she would not stop there, but be herself the contriver of our meeting. I was not deceived. The same eunuch that had passed by me before, returned an hour afterwards : Christian, says he, have you considered, and will you be bold enough to follow me ? I replied, Yes. Well then, answered he, Heaven preserve you. You shall see me again to-morrow morning. So saying, he retired. I accordingly saw him again about eight o'clock next morning. He beckoned to me to come to him. I obeyed the signal, and he led me into a hall, where there was a great long roll of cloth, which another eunuch and himself had just brought thither, and which they were to carry to the sultana's apartment to serve

for the decoration of an Arabian play, which she was then preparing for the entertainment of the Dey.

The two eunuchs having spread out the cloth, made me lie down in it at my full length, and then, at the hazard of suffocating me, rolled it up again with me in it. Afterwards taking each of them an end, they brought me safe into the chamber, where lay the beautiful Cachemirian. She had nobody with her but an old she-slave devoted to her pleasure. They two unrolled the cloth; and Farrukhnaz shewed such transports of joy at the sight of me, as discovered the genius of the women of her country. Bold as I was, I could not see myself thus suddenly transported into the secret apartment of the women, without some secret dread. The lady took notice of it, and to dissipate it, Young man, said she, fear nothing: Solyman is just now gone to his country-house. He will be there all this day. We may freely converse together.

These words gave me courage, and I assumed a countenance which redoubled the joy of the favourite. I am pleased with your person, said she, and I intend to soften the rigour of your slavery. I believe you worthy of the sentiments I have conceived for you. Though you are in the habit of a slave, yet you have a greatness in your looks which shews that you are no mean person. Speak freely. Tell me who you are. I very well know that prisoners of noble birth disguise it as much as they can, that their ransom may be the easier; but you need not behave in that manner with me: nay, it would very much offend me, since I promise you your freedom. Be sincere therefore, and confess to me you are of a good family. Indeed, Madam, replied I, it would be ungrateful to repay your goodness with dissimulation. Since you absolutely command me to tell you my quality, you must be sa-

tified. I am the son of a grandee of Spain. I do not know but I told truth. At least the sultana believed me, and pleased that she had thrown her eyes upon so worthy a cavalier, she assured me that it should not be her fault if we did not see one another often in private. We had a pretty long conversation together. I never met with a woman more engaging. She understood several languages, particularly Spanish, which she talked tolerably well. When she judged it time to part, I went by her order into a great osier-basket, covered with a piece of embroidered silk wrought with her own hands. Then the two slaves that had brought me in were called, and they carried me out as a present from the favourite to the Dey; which made it sacred against all the men intrusted with the guard of the women.

Farrukhnaz and I found other means of seeing one another; and that lovely captive did by degrees inspire me with as much love for her as she herself had for me. Our intelligence was secret during two months, though it is very difficult for the mysteries of love to be kept long from the eyes of the Argusses which are in a seraglio. But an unlucky accident disconcerted all our happiness, and my fortune was quite changed. One day when I had been brought into the sultana's apartment, in the body of an artificial dragon designed for one of our plays, while I was conversing with her, Solyman, who I imagined was busy in the country, surprised us. He came so suddenly into his favourite's chamber, that the old woman had hardly time enough to tell us of his arrival, and much less time had I to conceal myself. Thus I was the first thing the Dey cast his eyes upon.

He appeared astonished to see me, and his eyes were immediately red with fury. I looked upon myself as

a man on the brink of destruction, and imagined my tortures were already begun. As for Farrukhnaz, I saw indeed that she was terrified: but instead of owning her crime, and begging pardon, she said to Solyman: Signior, before you pronounce sentence upon me, be pleased to give me the hearing. Appearances indeed condemn me, and any body would imagine I have committed a piece of treachery against you which deserves the severest punishment. I have had this young slave in my apartment, and to bring him hither employed all the contrivances and stratagems I should have used if I had been violently in love with him. Nevertheless, I take our holy prophet to witness, that notwithstanding all this, I am not faithless to you. I had a mind to talk with this Christian slave, to convert him from the errors of his sect, and bring him over to that of the faithful. I found in him all the opposition I expected; yet, however, I have overcome all his prejudices, and he has made me a promise to embrace Mahometanism.

I own I ought to have contradicted the favourite, without any regard to the apparent danger I was in: but, terrified at the death which threatened both myself and the woman I loved, I remained confounded, and was not able to utter a word. The Dey, convinced by my silence that his mistress told him nothing but what was true, was immediately appeased. Madam, replied he, I am willing to believe that you have not dishonoured me, and that the desire of performing a deed so agreeable to our prophet engaged you in so delicate an action. I excuse your imprudence therefore, provided this captive take the turban immediately. Upon which he sent for a Marabou, or Mahometan priest, and I was dressed in a Turkish habit. I did what they would, without having the least power to

oppose it. Or rather, I did not know what I did in the disorder I was in. How many Christians are there, who would have been as weak as myself upon such an occasion!

After the ceremony, I went out of the seraglio, with the name of Sidy Hally, to exercise a little employment which Solyman gave me. I never saw the sultana afterwards: but one day a eunuch of her's came to me. He brought me jewels to the value of two thousand sultanines of gold, with a letter, wherein she assured me that she would never forget the generous complaisance I shewed in turning Mahometan to save her life. And indeed, besides the presents I received from Farrukhnaz, I obtained by her means an employment more considerable than the former, and in less than seven years time I became one of the richest renegadoes in Algier.

You will easily imagine, that if I assisted at the prayers which the Mussulmen make in their mosques, and did the other duties of their religion, it was nothing in me but grimace. I kept a firm resolution of entering again into the bosom of the church; and for that purpose I intended as soon as possible to get over into Spain or Italy with the wealth I had amassed. In the mean while I lived very agreeably. I had a fine house, pleasant gardens, a great number of slaves, and very handsome women in my seraglio. Though the Mahometans are forbid the use of wine, yet most of them will take the liberty to drink it in secret. For my part, I drank it without any fear or precaution, as all the renegadoes do. I remember two pot-companions, with whom I often passed away a night very merrily. One was a Jew, and the other an Arabian. I took them for good honest fellows, and therefore was not under the least constraint in their company. One night I invited them to sup with me: a dog of mine, which I lo-

ved passionately, happened to die that very day; we washed his body, and interred it with all the ceremonies used in the funerals of the Mahometans. We did not do this to ridicule the Mussulman religion, but only for a frolic, and to satisfy a foolish whim, which took us in our cups, to pay the last duties to my dog.

This action had like to have ruined me. The next day there came a man, who said to me, Signior Sidy Hally, an important affair brings me to you. His Lordship the Cady would speak with you. Pray take the pains to come to him immediately. An Arabian merchant, who supped with you last night, has informed him of a certain impiety committed by you with relation to a dog, which you buried. This is the occasion of my summoning you to appear before the judge. If you fail to appear, I give you notice that a process will be issued out against you. Having said this, he went his way, and left me thunderstruck at his summons. The Arabian had not the least cause to complain of me, and I could not imagine why the villain had betrayed me thus. The business, however, required my deep attention. I knew the Cady to be a man severe in appearance, but not very scrupulous at the bottom, so I put two hundred sultanines of gold into my purse, and repaired to his house: he had me into his closet, and said to me with a stern countenance: You are an impious, sacrilegious, abominable wretch. You have interred a dog like a Mussulman, profane as you are! Is this the respect you have for our most sacred ceremonies? and did you turn Mahometan only to make a jest of our worship? My Lord, replied I, the Arabian who gave you that false information, that false friend, is an accomplice in my crime, if it be a crime to grant the honours of burial to a faithful domestic, to a poor creature that had a thousand good qualities. He loved

people of worth and distinction so much, that even at his death he was resolved to give them proofs of his friendship. He leaves them all his wealth by a will which he made, and of which I am executor. To one he bequeaths twenty crowns, to another thirty, and he has not forgot your lordship, continued I, pulling out my purse; here are two hundred sultanines of gold, which he charged me to give you into your own hands. The Cady losing his gravity at this discourse of mine, could not help laughing for the life of him; and as we were alone, he took the purse without ceremony, saying, while he dismissed me, Go, Signior Sidy Hally, you did very well in interring with pomp and honour a dog that had so much consideration for persons of merit.

By this means I extricated myself out of this ugly business, and if it did not make me wiser, at least it made me more cautious. I drank no more with the Arabian, nor even with the Jew. I chose for my companion a young gentleman of Leghorn, who was my own slave. His name was Azarini. I was not like the other renegadoes, who are more cruel to their Christian slaves than the Turks themselves are. All mine waited very patiently for their redemption. And indeed, I used them so kindly, that they themselves told me they were more apprehensive of changing their master than desirous of liberty, notwithstanding the charms it has for people in slavery.

One day the Dey's ships returned with some considerable prizes. They brought above a hundred slaves of both sexes, which they had taken upon the coasts of Spain. Solymán kept but a very small number for himself, and the rest were exposed to sale. I went to the market-place, and bought a Spanish girl between ten and twelve years of age. She wept and took on at a violent rate. I was surprised to see one of her age so

sensible of captivity. I spoke to her in Spanish to moderate her affliction, and assured her she was fallen into the hands of a master who was not without humanity, though he wore a turban. The young creature was so full of her grief that she did not mind me. She did nothing but sigh and sob, and from time to time cried out: Oh mother! why are we parted? I should be contented, if we were but together. In pronouncing these words she turned her eyes upon a woman between forty and fifty, who stood at some little distance off, and who, with a downcast look, waited in silence till somebody purchased her. I asked the girl, if the person she looked at was her mother? Alas! yes, Sir, answered she, for God's sake do not let us be parted. Well! child, said I, if your being together will give you comfort, you shall soon be satisfied. At the same time I approached the mother to bargain for her; but I had no sooner beheld her face, than with the utmost emotion I recollected the features, the very features of Lucinda. Just Heaven! said I to myself; it is my mother! it is undoubtedly she herself! For her part, whether her misfortunes made every body about her seem her foes, or whether my dress disguised me, or that I was really altered in the twelve years that I had been absent from her, she did not at all remember me. After having bought her too, I carried her with her daughter to my house.

There it was that I meant to surprise her with informing her who I was: Madam, said I to Lucinda, is it possible that my features do not strike you? Can a mustachio and a turban make you forget your own son Raphael? At these words my mother started up, viewed me attentively, recollected me, and we tenderly embraced each other. Afterwards I embraced her daughter, who perhaps no more knew she had a brother, than

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I did that I had a sister. Confess, said I to my mother, that there is not in all your plays a meeting between two friends so true and natural as this. Son, replied she sighing, I at first rejoiced to see you; but my joy is converted into grief. In what a condition, alas! do I find you! My slavery gives me a thousand times less uneasiness than the odious habit——Heyday! interrupted I laughing, this is fine i'faith! Who would have looked for this conscientiousness in an actress? You must be greatly altered, mother, if my metamorphosis is so extremely offensive to you. Instead of being shocked at my turban, look upon me as an actor that plays the part of a Turk. Though I am a renegade, yet I am no more a Mussulman than I was in Spain; I am as strict an adherent to Christianity as ever. When you know all the adventures that have happened to me in this country, you will excuse my conduct. Love is the cause of my apostasy. I am a sacrificer to that little god. I take that from you. There is another reason, added I, why you should not be displeased at seeing me in this situation. You expected to have suffered a rigorous captivity, and instead of that have met, in the person of your master, a son who is full of tenderness and respect, and who is rich enough to maintain you here in abundance, till an occasion offers of returning into Spain with safety. You must therefore confess the truth of the proverb, which says, It is an ill wind that blows nobody good.

My son, answered Lucinda, since it is your intention to return again into your country, and there to abjure Mahometanism, I am satisfied. Thank Heaven, continued she, I may then carry back to Castile your little sister Beatrice, safe and sound as I brought her away. Yes, madam, said I, you may so. We will all three of us, as soon as possible, go home to the rest of our fami-

ly; for I suppose you have other tokens of your fruitfulness left in Spain? No, replied my mother, I have no other children besides you two; and Beatrice, I would have you to know, is the fruit of a lawful marriage. Ah! cried I, why did you give my little sister that advantage over me? How could you endure the thoughts of marriage? I have in my infancy heard you say a thousand times, that for a handsome woman to take a husband is unpardonable. That was a great many years ago, answered she; I have since altered my mind; even men, let their resolutions be never so firm, are apt to change them; and how then can you think a weak woman should be immoveable in her's? I will tell you the history of my life, continued she, since the time that you left Madrid. Then she made me the following relation, which I shall never forget. I will not deprive you of the pleasure of hearing so curious a story.

If you remember right, said my mother, it is almost thirteen years since you quitted young Leganez. About that time the Duke de Medina Celi told me he would sup with me in private some evening or other. He set the day. I waited for him. He came and liked me. He desired I would for his sake turn off all his rivals. I granted him his request, hoping he would pay me well for it. He did so. The very next day I received presents from him, which were afterwards followed by a great many others. I feared I should not be able to hold long in my chains a man of his quality; and I was the more apprehensive, because I knew he had escaped from several famous beauties, who lost him almost as soon as they had him. Yet the pleasure he took in my company was so far from decreasing, that he seemed to be more and more delighted with me every day. In short, I hit upon the art of amusing him, and

hindered his heart, which was naturally wavering and inconstant, from giving the reins to its natural inclinations.

He had now loved me three months, and I had reason to flatter myself that his passion would be of long continuance, when a gentlewoman of my acquaintance, and myself, went to a concert of music where he happened to be with his Duchess. We chanced to place ourselves pretty near her Ladyship, who took it in her head to be offended at my daring to appear in the place where she was. She sent one of her women to bid me go out that moment. I gave her messenger a rough answer. The Duchess was so incensed, that she complained to her husband, who came to me in person, and said to me: Lucinda, go out: when a nobleman condescends to converse with such a creature as you are, she ought not therefore to forget herself. If we love you better than our wives, at least we honour our wives more than you: and as often as you have the impudence to set yourselves up against them, you will always have the mortification to be treated with contempt.

Happily for me, the Duke made me this shocking speech in so low a voice, that nobody else heard it. I withdrew in the utmost perplexity, and cried for vexation at having been so dreadfully mortified. To add to my confusion, the players got notice of this affair that very night. One would imagine those people had a demon among them that takes delight in telling the one what happens to the other. Has an actor, for example, been guilty of some extravagancy in a debauch, or an actress had a quarrel with her gallant? All the company are immediately informed of it. My comrades therefore knew what had happened at the concert, and I will leave you to judge how free they were in laugh-

ing at my expence. There reigns among them a spirit of charity, which is sure to manifest itself upon such occasions. But I despised all they could say, and comforted myself as well as I could for the loss of the Duke de Medina Celi, who no more visited me; and I was informed shortly after that a nymph of the opera had made a conquest of him.

When an actress has the good fortune to be in vogue, she cannot want lovers; and the passion of a nobleman, though it last but three days, adds greatly to her value. I was presently besieged with gallants, when it was known in Madrid that the Duke had left me. The rivals I had sacrificed to him, were now more captivated with my charms than before, and returned to my chains in whole crowds: I received the homage of a thousand other hearts. I was never so much in fashion. Of all the men who courted my graces, none seemed so zealous as a lusty German belonging to the Duke of Ossuna. He was no very amiable person indeed; but he won me by a thousand pistoles, which he had scraped up in his master's service, and of which he was wondrous generous, to gain the honour of being in the list of my happy lovers. This Adonis's name was Brutandorf. As long as his money lasted, I gave him a favourable reception; but when that was gone, he found my door shut. This proceeding of mine displeased him. He came to me at the theatre in the middle of the play. I was behind the scenes. He began to reproach me. I laughed in his face. He flew into a rage, and gave me a box on the ear, like a true German as he was. I shrieked aloud. The play was interrupted. I came upon the stage, and addressing myself to the Duke of Ossuna, who happened to be present that night with his de chess, I demanded satisfaction for the High Dutch behaviour of his gentleman. The Duke ordered the

play to go on, and said he would hear both parties, when we had concluded the piece. As soon as it was over, I came before the Duke, and told him my grievances in a very passionate manner. As for the German, he employed but two words in his defence. He said, that instead of repenting of what he had done, if it were to do again, he would do it. The Duke of Ossuna, having heard us both, said to my adversary: Brutandorf, I discharge you my house, and forbid you appearing before me again; not for having given this actress a box on the ear, but for having been disrespectful to your master and mistress, and putting a stop to the entertainment in their presence.

I was very much vexed at this sentence, and greatly provoked that the German should not be turned away for the affront he had given me. I imagined that such a crime against an actress ought to have been as severely punished as petty treason; but this disagreeable event undeceived me, and convinced me that the world makes a great deal of distinction between the actors and the characters they represent. This gave me a disgust to the stage. I resolved to abandon it, and go spend the remainder of my days at a distance from Madrid. I chose the city of Valencia for the place of my retreat, and thither I went incog. with the value of twenty thousand ducats in cash and jewels, which I thought more than enough to maintain me the rest of my days, since I designed to lead a retired life. I hired a small house at Valencia, and took no other domestics than a woman and a page, who knew no more of me than the rest of my neighbours. I gave myself out for the widow of an officer of the King's household, and pretended to have pitched upon Valencia for the place of my residence, because it had the character of being one of the most agreeable places in all Spain. I contracted but very few

acquaintance, and observed so regular a conduct, that no body ever suspected me to have been a player. But, notwithstanding my desire of being private, I attracted the notice of a cavalier, who had a country-house near Paterna. He was a very handsome gentleman, between thirty and forty years old: but, for all his nobility, he was very much in debt, which is no great rarity in the kingdom of Valencia, more than in a great many other countries.

This Signior Hidalgo finding my person agreeable enough, was willing to know if I could answer his purpose as to my fortune. He sent his spies out upon the hunt, and had the pleasure to be informed by them, that with a tolerable face I was in very flowing circumstances. Pleased with this account of me, he soon afterwards sent me a good old woman, who told me, that being equally charmed with my virtue and beauty, he made me a tender of his faith, and that he was ready to lead me to the altar, if I would favour him with my hand. I asked three days time to consider of it. I inquired about the gentleman; and the excellent character I heard of him, though I found his affairs were but in a pitiful posture, made me presently determine to marry him, which I did not long after.

Don Manuel de Xercia, which was my husband's name, carried me immediately to his castle: it had a very ancient look, of which he was excessive vain. He said it had been formerly built by one of his ancestors, and from thence concluded that there was not a more ancient house in Spain than that of Xercia. But this fine title to nobility was almost destroyed by time; and the castle, which was propped up in several places, threatened immediate ruin. How happy it was for Don Manuel that he married me! Above half of my money was spent in repairs, and the rest served to put us in a

condition to make a figure in the country. And now behold me as it were in a new world; transformed into a lady of a castle, and the greatest woman in all the parish. What a metamorphosis was here! I was too good an actress not to support, with dignity, the splendour with which I was invested by my rank. I assumed high theatrical airs, which made the poor country folk believe me descended from some very great family. What sport would there have been among them at my expence, had they known the truth of the matter! The people of fashion would have thrown a thousand taunts upon me, and even the peasants have abated a great deal of the respect they now shewed me.

I had lived very happily with Don Manuel about six years, when he died. He left my affairs in great perplexity, with your sister Beatrice, who was then four years old. The castle, which was our whole estate, happened unluckily to be mortgaged to several creditors, the chief of whom was called Bernard Astuto; and well he deserved that name! He practised at Valencia the employment of an attorney, which he performed with great skill, having studied the law a little to be the better skilled in doing injustice. What a terrible creditor he was! A castle in the claws of such an attorney, is like a dove in the talons of a kite. Signior Astuto, as soon as he understood my husband's death, immediately laid siege to the castle. He had undoubtedly blown it up by the mines of chicanery he had begun to dig, if my good genius had not interposed its assistance, and resolved to make the besieger my slave. I had the good fortune to captivate him in an interview which I had with him relating to our affairs. I own I spared nothing that I thought might inspire him with love, and the desire of saving my estate made me try upon him all the airs and glances with which I had

so often succeeded so well. But though I was a very great mistress of my art, yet I very much feared I should never be able to inflame an attorney. He was so ingulphed in business, that he did not seem susceptible of an amorous impression. Yet this morose, this awkward scrawler took more pleasure in seeing me than I could imagine: Madam, said he, I do not know how to make love: I have always applied myself so closely to my business, that I know nothing of the usages and customs of gallantry. Not that I am ignorant of the essential part thereof; and to come to the point, if you will have me, I will stop all further proceedings in the suit; I will bubble the creditors, who have joined with me to have your estate sold. You shall enjoy the income, and the property of it shall be your daughter's. Beatrice's interest and my own did not permit me to hesitate. I accepted the proposal. The attorney kept his word. He turned his arms against the other creditors, and secured me in the possession of my castle. This perhaps was the first time he ever befriended the widow and the orphan.

Thus I became an attorney's wife; but by this new match I quite lost myself in the minds of the gentry of Valencia. The women of quality looked on me as one that had debased herself to the greatest degree, and therefore would not keep company with me. I was forced to take up with some city-ladies. This at first gave me some little uneasiness, because for above six years together I had been used to keep company with none but ladies of distinction: but I soon made myself easy in that point. I became acquainted with the wife of a scrivener, and with those of two attorneys: their characters were very comical. There was something ridiculous in their behaviour, which diverted me extremely. Their ladyships fancied they had a thousand excellencies a-

bove the rest of their sex. Alas! cried I to myself sometimes when I saw their extravagancies, this is the way of the world! All imagine they excel their neighbours. I used to think, that only actresses forgot themselves at this rate. But I found your city-dames were not a whit more reasonable. I wish, for their punishment, they were obliged to keep in their houses the pictures of their ancestors: faith, I hardly think they would place them in the most conspicuous part.

Four years after our marriage, Signior Bernard Astuto fell sick, and died, without children. With the estate he left me, and what I had before, I saw myself a very rich widow, and had the reputation of being so. Upon this report a Sicilian gentleman, named Colifichini, resolved to attach himself to me, either till he had ruined me or married me: he left it to me to chuse. He came from Palermo to see Spain, and having satisfied his curiosity, he waited at Valencia for an opportunity of returning into Sicily. The cavalier was about five and twenty years of age. He was well shaped, though little, and, in a word, his person pleased me. He found means to speak with me in private, and I must needs own I grew passionately in love with him at our very first interview. The young rogue, on his side, seemed quite captivated with my charms. I believe really we should have married immediately, had not the attorney's death, which was still recent, hindered me from contracting so soon a new engagement. But ever since I had taken a fancy to matrimony, I observed measures of decency, to avoid scandal.

It was settled therefore, that we should defer our marriage for some time. In the mean while Colifichini was very assiduous about me, and his love, instead of cooling, seemed to grow more violent every day. The poor gentleman was not very well provid-

ed with ready money. I perceived it, and took care to furnish him. Besides that I was almost twice his age, I remembered that in my youth I had laid the men under contribution, and I looked upon what I gave now as a sort of restitution which eased my conscience. We waited as patiently as we were able, till the time of my mourning was expired. Then we went to the altar, where we bound ourselves to each other in eternal bonds. Afterwards we retired to my castle; where, I may say, we lived more like tender lovers than man and wife: but alas! we were not destined to be long happy in one another: A pleurisy carried off my beloved Colifichini.

Here I interrupted my mother. What! Madam, said I, your third husband die too! You are certainly a dangerous tenement! What could I do, son? replied she. Can I prolong the days which heaven has counted? If I have lost three husbands, how could I help it? I very much regretted the loss of two of them. He that I least lamented was the attorney. As I married him only for interest, I was easily comforted for being bereft of him. But, continued she, to return to Colifichini, some months after his death I had a mind to go myself to see a country house near Palermo, which he had settled upon me for my dowry, in our marriage-contract. I embarked with my daughter to cross into Sicily; but we were taken in our passage by the Dey of Algier's ships, and were brought to this city. You, by good fortune, happened to be in the place where we were exposed to sale. We might otherwise have fallen into the hands of some barbarous master, who would have used us cruelly, and kept us perhaps always in slavery, while you might have known nothing what was become of us.

Such was my mother's story. After which, gen-

lemen, I gave her the best apartment in my house, with permission to live how she thought fit; which she liked very much. She had in the whole course of her life been so accustomed to love, that she could not possibly do without a husband or a lover. At first she cast her eyes upon some of my slaves; but Haly Pegelin, a Greek renegade, who came frequently to my house, soon attracted all her attention. She conceived more love for him than she had ever had for Colichini; and she was so perfect a mistress of the art of pleasing men, that she found means to charm him as well as the rest. I winked at their intelligence. My thoughts then were wholly employed upon my return into Spain. The Dey had permitted me to arm a ship for piracy. This took up all my time, and about a week before I had finished it, I said to Lucinda: Madam, we shall now depart from Algier very speedily; we shall bid farewell to this abode, for which you have such an aversion.

My mother became pale at these words, and stood speechless. I was greatly astonished at it. What do I see? cried I. Whence can proceed the uneasiness which appears in your countenance? You look as if these tidings gave you affliction instead of joy. I thought it would be the highest pleasure to you to hear that I have made every thing ready for our departure. Have you no longer then any desire of returning into Spain? None at all, son, replied my mother; I have felt so much sorrow there, that I renounce it for ever. What do I hear? cried I, surprised: say rather it is love which gives you an aversion to your country. How are you altered! When first you arrived in this city, every thing you saw was odious to you: but Haly Pegelin has given you other inclinations. I do not deny it, replied Lucinda: I love that renegade, whom I

design to take for my fourth husband. What a project is this! interrupted I with horror: What, marry a Turk! Do you forget that you are a Christian? or rather, you never possessed any thing of it but the name. Ah! mother, what a project do you lay before my eyes! You are resolved upon destruction. You are about to embrace that voluntarily, which I did only through necessity.

I made use of several other arguments to dissuade her from this folly; but my eloquence was all to no purpose. She had taken her resolutions. She did not content herself with following her wicked inclination, and leaving me to marry a renegade; she wanted to carry Beatrice along with her also. I opposed her stoutly in this. Ah, wretched Lucinda! said I; if nothing can persuade you, at least ruin none but yourself by your rash fury. Do not drag an innocent child to the precipice from which you are going to cast yourself. Lucinda left me without making any reply. I fancied she had still some remains of reason in her, which hindered her from persisting in demanding her daughter. How little was I acquainted with my mother! Two days afterwards one of my slaves said to me: My Lord, take care of yourself. A slave of Pegelin has imparted a thing to me, of which you cannot make your advantage too soon. Your mother has changed her religion, and to punish you for having refused her Beatrice, is resolved to inform the Dey of your intended flight. I did not in the least doubt but Lucinda was capable of doing what the slave said. I had had time to study her temper, and I found that by the habit of acting bloody parts in tragedies, she had made herself familiar with guilt. She would not have been in the least affected with seeing me burnt a-

live, and would only have looked upon it as the catastrophe of a play.

I was determined therefore not to neglect the notice my slave had given me. I hastened the preparation of my ship. I hired Turks, according to the custom of the Algerine pirates that go on a cruize; but I hired no more than just enow to clear me from all suspicion, and I sailed out of the port as soon as possible, with all my slaves, and my sister Beatrice. You may well believe that I did not forget to carry with me what little money and jewels I was master of. It might amount to about the value of six thousand ducats. When we got to sea, we began to secure the Turks. We easily chained them, because my slaves were more numerous than they. We had so fair a wind that we soon reached the coast of Italy. We arrived, without the least bad accident, at the port of Leghorn, where I believe the whole city ran out to see us land. The father of my slave Azarini happening, either by chance, or out of curiosity, to be among the spectators, viewed all my slaves with great attention as they got out of the ship; but though he searched for the features of his son, yet he little expected to find him here. What transports and embraces were there between them, when they recollected each other!

When Azarini had told his father who I was, and what had brought me to Leghorn, the old man obliged me, and Beatrice too, to take a lodging in his house. I shall omit the detail of a thousand things which I was forced to do to re-enter into the bosom of the church: I shall only observe, that I abjured Mahometanism with much more sincerity than I embraced it. After I had entirely purged myself of my Algerine gall, I sold my ship, and gave all my slaves their

freedom. As for the Turks, they were detained in the prisons of Leghorn, to be exchanged for Christians. I received from both the Azarini's the best of treatment: nay, the son married my sister Beatrice, who indeed was no ill match to him, since she was a gentleman's daughter, and heiress of the castle of Xercia, which my mother had taken care to farm out to a rich countryman of Paterna, when she formed the design of crossing into Sicily.

Having staid some time at Leghorn, I set out from thence for Florence, which I longed to see. I did not go thither without letters of recommendation. Old Azarini had friends in the court of the Great Duke, and he recommended me to them as a Spanish gentleman that was his ally. I prefixed Don to my name, imitating therein a vast many mean Spaniards, who make no scruple of assuming that title when out of their own country. I therefore called myself Don Raphael with a great deal of impudence, and as I had brought from Algier wherewithal to support my nobility and dignity, I appeared at court in splendour. The cavaliers to whom Azarini had written in my favour, gave out that I was a person of quality; so that their testimony, together with the airs I gave myself, made me easily pass for a considerable man. I soon got acquainted with some of the principal lords, who presented me to the Great Duke. I had the good fortune to please him. I applied myself to study the disposition of that prince. I listened attentively to what his oldest courtiers said to him, and by that means discovered his inclinations. I observed among other things, that he loved raillery, tales, and witty repartees. I modelled myself accordingly. I wrote in my table-book every morning the stories I designed for the day. I had a whole budget full of them. But, though I

was very careful not to be too lavish of them, it began to grow empty, so that I must have been obliged to use repetition, or to let every body see that I was at the end of my apothegms, if the fruitfulness of my invention had not furnished me with fictions: I made gallant and humorous tales, which very much diverted the Great Duke: and, as it frequently happens with professed wits, I wrote down every morning the bright sallies of wit I should make use of in the afternoon as extempore.

I also set up for a poet, and consecrated my muse to the honour of the prince. I freely confess my verses were none of the best; neither were they criticised: but had they been better, I doubt whether they could have met with a better reception from the Great Duke. He seemed very well satisfied with them. Perhaps the subject hindered him from seeing their faults. Be that as it will, he by degrees took such a liking to me, as gave umbrage to the courtiers. They endeavoured to find out who I was; but in vain. Discovering, however, that I had been a renegade, they did not fail to inform the prince of it, in hopes of ruining me with him: but it would not do. On the contrary, the Great Duke one day bid me give him a faithful account of my voyage to Algier. I obeyed him: and my adventures, which I did not at all disguise, greatly diverted him.

Don Raphael, says he to me, after I had ended my narration, I have a kindness for you, and I will give you a convincing proof of it. I will make you the depository of my secrets; and, as an earnest, will tell you that I am in love with the wife of one of my ministers of state. She is the handsomest lady in all my court, but at the same time the most virtuous. She applies herself everlastingly to the affairs of her family, and

is solely attached to her husband, who adores her; she seems to be ignorant of the noise which her charms make in Florence. You may easily imagine that the conquest of such a lady must be very difficult: but yet as inaccessible as she is, she has sometimes heard my sighs; I have found means to talk with her in private. She knows my sentiments. I cannot flatter myself so far as to imagine that I have inspired her with mutual love. She has given me no cause to form so agreeable a thought. However, I do not despair of pleasing her by my assiduity, and by the discreet secrecy which I observe in my addresses.

No one knows of the passion I have for this lady, continued he, but herself. Instead of following the dictates of my inclination without constraint; and acting as lord of my own will, I conceal my love as much as possible. I think myself bound to do this much for the sake of Mascarini, the husband of her I love. The zeal and attachment which he shews for me, his services and his probity, oblige me to conduct myself with great secrecy and circumspection. I will not plunge a dagger in the breast of that unhappy husband, by openly declaring myself in love with his wife. I would, if possible, keep him ignorant of my passion; for I am persuaded he would die with grief, should he know the secret I intrust you with. I therefore conceal my steps as much as possible, and have pitched upon you for my ambassador to Lucretia, to inform her of all the miseries I endure by putting this constraint upon myself. You shall be the interpreter of my thoughts. I do not doubt but you will acquit yourself of this employment to a miracle. Contract acquaintance with Mascarini. Endeavour to gain his friendship. Get access to his house, and procure the liberty of talking with his wife. This is what I beg

of you, and which I am certain you will perform with all the address and discretion requisite in so delicate an affair.

I promised the Great Duke to use my utmost efforts to answer his confidence, and to contribute to the success of his flame. I kept my word with him soon afterwards. I spared nothing to please Mascarini, and I easily accomplished my end. Charmed to see his friendship sought after by one so well beloved by the prince, he met me half-way in it. His house was always open to me. I had free access to his wife, and I may say without vanity, I behaved myself so well, that he never had the least suspicion of the business I came upon. It is true, for an Italian, he was not much addicted to jealousy: he confided in the virtue of his Lucretia, and shutting himself up in his study, often left me alone with her. Then I came bluffly to the point. I talked to her of the Great Duke's passion, and told her that I came thither only to talk to her of that prince. She seemed not to be taken with him; but yet I could observe that her vanity would not give her leave entirely to reject his addresses. She took delight in hearing them, though she would not make any return. She did not want understanding, but she was a woman; and I could see that her virtue insensibly gave way to the pride of having a sovereign in her chains. In short, the prince had reason to flatter himself, that, without using the violence of Tarquin, he might see Lucretia in his arms. But an accident, which he little expected, destroyed all these hopes, as I shall inform you.

I have naturally a good deal of impudence with the women. I contracted this temper, be it good or bad, among the Turks. Lucretia was beautiful. I forgot that I was only to play the part of an ambassador. I

spoke for myself. I offered my services to the lady with all the gallantry I was master of. Instead of seeming shocked at my boldness, and answering me with anger, she said to me smiling; On my word, Don Raphael, the Great Duke has a faithful agent of you! You serve him with an integrity that can never be enough commended! Madam, answered I, in the same tone, do not let us examine things too scrupulously. Let us have no reflections, I beseech you; I know very well they are against me; but I give myself up entirely to my love. And after all, I do not think I am the first confident that ever betrayed his master in point of an amour. Your great men often find very dangerous rivals in the persons of their Mercuries. It may be so, replied Lucretia: but I would have you to know I have more pride in me than that comes to: less than a prince must never hope to touch my heart. Regulate your conduct upon this information, continued she with a graver face, and let us now talk of something else. I am willing to forget what is past, upon condition you never presume to be so audacious again: if you are, you may repent it.

Though this was fair warning, and I ought to have followed it accordingly, yet I continued to teaze Mascarini's wife about my own passion, as boldly as ever. I even pressed her more warmly than I did before, to make me a return for my tenderness, and I was so rash as to offer to take liberties with her. The lady growing downright angry, both at my discourse, and at the Turkeny of my behaviour, observed no measures with me. She threatened to inform the Great Duke of my insolence, and to prevail upon him to punish me as I deserved. I was provoked in my turn at these menaces. My love was changed into hatred. I resolved to be revenged of Lucretia for her contempt of me.

I went to her husband, and having made him swear that he would not betray me, I informed him of the intelligence there was between his wife and the Duke, with whom (to make the scene the more interesting) I pretended she was passionately in love. Mascarini, to prevent what might happen, without making any more noise about the matter, locked up his wife in a private room, where he had her carefully watched by persons whom he could trust. While she was thus surrounded with Argusses, who prevented her sending any message to the Great Duke, I told that prince in a very woeful tone, that he must have no more thoughts of Lucretia: I intimated to him, that Mascarini had certainly discovered the whole secret, since he kept so strict a guard over his wife; that I could not conceive what had given him cause to suspect me, who had always behaved myself before him with abundance of discretion and reserve; that perhaps the lady herself had owned all to her husband, and so was locked up with her consent to avoid addresses which alarmed her virtue. The prince seemed very much afflicted at my relation. I was concerned at his sorrow, and have more than once repented what I had done: but it was too late. Besides, I must confess I felt a secret pleasure in having reduced to those straits the haughty woman who treated me with so much disdain.

I thus tasted with impunity the pleasure of revenge, which is so sweet to all the world, but chiefly to Spaniards; when one day the Great Duke being with five or six lords of his court, and myself, said to us: In what manner ought he to be punished, who has abused the confidence of his prince, and tried to undermine him in his mistress's favour? He ought, says one, of the courtiers, to be torn in pieces by four wild horses: another was for having him beaten to death with

sticks: the least cruel of these Italians said, that he would only have him tossed from the top of some high tower. But, says the Great Duke, what is Don Raphael's opinion? I dare say the Spaniards are no less severe upon such occasions than the Italians.

Upon this I guessed, as you may easily imagine, that Mascarini had not kept his oath with me, or that his wife had found means to let the prince know what had passed between her and me. The disturbance of my mind presently flew into my face. But whatever confusion I was in, I answered boldly; My Lord, we Spaniards are more generous. We should upon such an occasion forgive the confident, and by that goodness produce in his soul an eternal remorse for having betrayed his prince. Well, said the prince, I too am capable of the same generosity. I forgive thee, traitor. And indeed I can blame nobody but myself, who was so indiscreet as to repose any confidence in a man whom I did not know, and whom I had reason to distrust after the character I had heard of him. Don Raphael, added he, your punishment shall be this; Leave my dominions immediately, and see me no more. I retired that moment, less afflicted at my disgrace than overjoyed at coming off at so easy a rate. I embarked the very same day in a ship belonging to Barcelona, which was just setting sail from Leghorn to return home.

I interrupted Don Raphael in this part of his story. Methinks, for a man of your wit, says I, you committed a very great error in not leaving Florence immediately after having discovered to Mascarini the prince's love for Lucretia. You must needs think the Great Duke would soon come to the knowledge of your treachery. I own it, replied the son of Lucinda; and therefore, notwithstanding the assurance which

Mascarini had given me, that he would not expose me to the Duke's resentment, I did intend to be gone as soon as I could conveniently.

I arrived at Barcelona, continued he, with the remainder of the wealth I had brought from Algier, and of which I had squandered away the better part at Florence in setting up for a gentleman. I did not stay long in Catalonia. I died with impatience to see Madrid again, the charming place of my nativity, and I satisfied this desire as soon as possible. When I arrived in that city, I happened to take a lodging in the same house with a lady whose name was Camilla, and who, though she had been some time out of her leading-strings, had the most winning way with her I ever saw. Signior Gil Blas can bear witness to the truth of this, for he saw her at Valladolid not long after. She had still more wit than beauty, and never had any lady of pleasure a happier talent for catching of cul-lies. But she was not like those coquets who lay up the acknowledgments of their lovers: when she stript a man of business, she shared the spoils with the first sharper that hit her fancy.

We took a liking to one another at our first interview, and the conformity of our inclinations joined us so closely, that our effects soon became common between us both. It is true, we did not over much abound in money; what we had we were not long in spending. We thought of nothing further than our pleasure, without making the least use of the genius we had of fingering the purse of our neighbour; but want at length awakened those talents which pleasure seemed to have benumbed. My dear Raphael, says Camilla, let us renounce a constancy which ruins us. You may captivate some rich widow; and I, some wealthy old nobleman: if we continue to be thus faithful, here will

be two fortunes utterly spoiled. Charming Camilla, replied I, you have anticipated me. I was just going to make you the same proposal. My queen, I assent to your scheme. That we may be the better able to preserve a mutual ardour for each other, let us try what conquests we can make; our infidelity will turn to triumphs in the end.

Having made this convention, we took the field. We spent a great deal of pains, without being able to meet with what we sought. Camilla lighted upon none but fops, who have seldom a shilling in their pockets; and I upon women who were rather for levying contributions, than paying them. As love proved deaf to our prayers, we had recourse to sharpening. We gave so many proofs of our skill in this trade, that our fame reached the ears of the corregidor; and that magistrate, who was as severe as the devil, commanded one of his alguazils to apprehend us; but the officer, who was as good as the corregidor was bad, gave us time to depart from Madrid, for a small sum of money which we clapped into his hand. We took the road to Valladolid, and went and settled ourselves there. I hired a house, where I lodged with Camilla, whom, to avoid scandal, I called sister. At first we put a bridle to our industry, and before we formed any enterprize, we determined to study the ground a little.

One day a man accosted me in the street, saluted me very civilly, and said to me, Signior Don Raphael, do you know me? I replied, No. I remember you perfectly well, resumed he, I have seen you at the court of Tuscany, and I then belonged to the guard of the Great Duke. It is some months ago, added he, since I quitted the service of that prince. I am come to Spain with an Italian of amazing finesse. We have been at Valladolid about three weeks. We lodge

with a Castilian and a Gallician, a couple of as honest fellows as you shall meet with. We live together by the work of our hands, make good chear, and divert ourselves like princes. If you will join company with us, my comrades will receive you gladly; for I always thought you a gallant man, of a temper not addicted to scruples, and a professed brother of our order.

This rogue's frankness excited mine. Since you discover yourself to be so generous, said I to him, it is but reasonable that I should explain myself in the same manner to you. I own therefore I am no novice in my profession; and if my modesty would give me leave to tell my exploits, you would see that you have not judged too advantageously of me; but I shall forbear praising myself, and conclude with telling you that I readily accept of the place you offer me in your company, and shall neglect nothing to convince you that I am not unworthy of it. I had no sooner signified to this ambidexter that I consented to encrease the number of his comrades, than he brought me to them, and introduced me into their acquaintance. Here it was that I saw, for the first time, the famous Ambrose de Lamela. Those gentlemen examined me concerning my skill in the art of dextrously bringing into one's own pocket the money of one's neighbour. They wanted to know whether or no I understood the principles of their art: but I shewed them some stratagems, which they themselves were ignorant of, and which made them admire my ability. They were still more surpris'd, when setting at naught the dexterity of my hand, as too vulgar a qualification, I told them that I excelled in those tricks which require wit. To convince them that what I said was true, I told them my adventure with Jerome de Moyadas; and upon the bare relation of this story they

looked upon me as so superior a genius, that I was chosen their chief, by unanimous consent. I let them see that I deserved this honour by an infinite number of knavish designs, which we put in practice, and in which I was as it were the chief manager. When we wanted an actress to help us out at a shift, we applied to Camilla, who always played the parts we gave her to admiration.

About that time our brother Ambrose was tempted to pay a visit to his native country. He set out for Galicia, assuring us that he would certainly return as soon as possible. He satisfied his desire; and upon his way back, going to Burgos in quest of some adventure, a host, a friend of his, put him into the service of Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, whose affairs he at the same time made him acquainted with. Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, continued he, addressing himself to me, you know how we eased you of your portmanteau at Valladolid. I do not doubt but you suspected Ambrose to be the chief instrument of that theft; and he really was so. He came to us at your very first arrival in that town. He informed us of the condition you were in, and we the gentlemen-undertakers regulated our conduct accordingly. But you are ignorant of the consequences of that adventure, which I will therefore tell you. Ambrose and I went off with your portmanteau, and mounting your mules, took the road to Madrid, without troubling our heads about Camilla or our comrades, who no doubt were as much surprised as you could be at not seeing us next day.

On the second day of our journey we changed our resolution, and instead of going to Madrid, which I did not quit without good cause, we passed through Zeberos, and continued our course to Toledo. Our first care here was to dress ourselves like gentlemen.

Then giving ourselves out for two Gallician brothers that were travelling for curiosity, we soon scraped acquaintance with people of character. I was so used to act the man of quality, that I easily passed for one: and as people are generally dazzled by expense and liberality, we imposed upon the whole town by the treats we began to give to the ladies. Among the women I saw there was one that touched me. She was more beautiful than Camilla, and much younger. I inquired who she was, and heard that she was called Violante, and that she was married to a cavalier, who being already cloyed with her embraces, ran after those of a courtesan whom he loved. I wanted no more to determine me to establish Violante the sovereign mistress of my affections.

She presently perceived the conquest she had made. I began to follow her whithersoever she went, and to commit a thousand impertinencies, to persuade her that I desired no better than to comfort her for the infidelity of her husband. The lady made reflections thereupon, and at length I had the pleasure to know her approbation of my sentiments. I received a billet from her in answer to several which I had sent her by one of those old women who are so serviceable in Spain and Italy. The lady sent me word, that her husband supped every night at his mistress's, and always came home very late. I soon comprehended the meaning of this. I went the very same night under Violante's window, and entered into a very tender conversation with her. Before we parted we agreed to enjoy the same opportunity every evening, without prejudice to any other act of gallantry, which it should be lawful for us to exercise in the day-time.

Hitherto, Don Balthazar, which was the name of my princess's husband, came off very cheaply; but I

was for loving more physically, and I repaired one night to the lady's window, with intention to let her know, that I could not live if I had not a private meeting with her in some place more suitable to the excess of my love; which was a favour I had not as yet been able to obtain. But just as I had got thither, I saw coming into the street a man who seemed to observe me. In effect, it was the husband, who happening to come from his courtesan earlier than usual, and seeing a man near his house, instead of going in, walked about in the street. I was doubtful for some time what to do: but at length I resolved to accost Don Balthazar, who knew me no more than I did him. Signior Cavalier, said I to him, pray leave the street to me this one night. Another time I will be as complaisant to you. Signior, replied he, I was just going to make you the same request: I am in love with a young lady, whom her brother guards like a dragon, and who lives about twenty paces off. I should be glad to have the street to myself. There is a way, replied I, of satisfying us both, without incommoding either of us. For, added I, shewing him his own house, the lady I serve lives there: we may even assist each other, if either of us happen to be attacked. With all my heart, answered he; I will go to my place of appointment, and we will back one another, if there is any occasion. Thus saying, he went away, but he did it only to observe me the better, which the darkness of the night enabled him to do unsuspected.

As for my own part, I approached Violante's balcony in security, where she soon appeared. We fell to conversing together: I did not omit pressing my queen to grant me a private meeting in some particular place. She at first refused my importunities a little, the more to enhance the value of the favour I so-

licitéd: but afterwards pulling a letter out of her pocket, There, said she, throwing it to me, you will find in that paper the promise of what you so importune me for. With this she went her ways, because the usual time of her husband's return approached. I pocketed the letter, and hastened to the place where Balthazar had told me he was concerned. But the husband, who plainly saw what I wanted with his wife, met me, and presently asked me, whether or no I was pleased with my good fortune? I have no reason to be otherwise, replied I. But prithee how have you succeeded? Has love favoured your addresses? Alas! no, answered he, that damned brother of her's was returned from his country-house, where we thought he would stay till to-morrow. This unlucky accident has baulked me of the pleasure which had so flattered my hopes.

Protestations of the sincerest friendship were reciprocally made between Don Balthazar and myself; and to tie the knot still faster, we agreed to meet the next morning in the great square. This cavalier, after we parted, went home, and took no notice to Violante of what he knew. The next day he repaired to the place of rendezvous, and a moment after came I. We saluted each other with demonstrations of friendship, as false on one side as they were sincere on the other. Then the crafty Balthazar communicated to me his feigned intrigue with the lady he told me of the night before. He related long stories of his own inventing, in order to draw me on to relate in my turn how matters went between me and Violante. Ifor my part fell into the snare, and without the least reserve declared what had passed. I even shewed him the letter she had given me, couched in the following words.

“TO-MORROW I shall dine with Donna Agnes: you know where she lives. It is at that faithful friend’s house that I intend to give you a private interview. I can no longer refuse you a favour of which you seem so deserving.”

On my word, said Don Balthazar, this letter promises full payment for all your past languishings. I congratulate you before-hand on the happiness that attends you. As he spoke this, he could not help discovering a sort of disorder in his face; but I was so much engrossed by my hopes, that I did not much mind the deportment of my confident, who soon withdrew, for fear I should perceive how much he was disturbed. He ran to inform his brother-in-law of this adventure. I cannot tell what passed between them: this only I know, that Don Balthazar came and knocked at Donna Agnes’s door while I was at that lady’s in company with Violante. As soon as we learned who it was, I made my escape at a back-door. I had no sooner disappeared, than the women recovered themselves of the fright he had put them in, and received him with such effrontery, that he suspected they had either laid me in some hole, or let me escape at some private outlet. I shall not tell you what he said to Donna Agnes and his wife, because it never came to my knowledge.

Mean while, without suspecting myself bubbled by Don Balthazar, I went away, giving him a hearty curse or two, and returned to the great square, where I had appointed to meet Lamela: but he came not, having business of his own to manage; and the rogue was more fortunate than I. Whilst I was waiting for him, I discovered my treacherous confident, advancing towards me with an air of gaiety and self-satisfaction. Up he came, and with a smiling countenance asked me the

result of my interview with my nymph at Donna Agnes's. Surely, said I, some dæmon out of very spite takes a pleasure to disappoint me. For whilst I was alone with the lady, and was pressing her to make me happy, who should knock at the door but her husband, plague confound him! so that being obliged to make a speedy retreat, I flew out at a back-door, bequeathing to Beelzebub that troublesome cuckold who had broke all my measures. I am heartily sorry for it, (cried Don Bathazar, who secretly rejoiced to see me mortified.) An impertinent puppy! adds he. Gad, if I was you, I would give him no quarter. Never trouble yourself about that, replied I. His honour shall make its exit this very night, else I shall not have my will. His wife, you must know, when we parted, bade me not be dejected, but come to her window sooner than usual, and she would let me in; but desired me, by way of precaution, to come attended with two or three friends to assist me, for fear of any surprise. Never sure was so prudent a lady! said he; I will accompany you to her. Ah, my dear friend, cried I, overjoyed, while I threw my arms around his neck, how shall I discharge the obligations you lay on me? Nay more, replied he, there is a young fellow I am acquainted with, as stout as Hercules; he shall be of the party, and with such a guard you may boldly advance.

I did not know what acknowledgments to make to this new friend, so transported was I at these demonstrations of his zeal. In a word, I accepted of his offer; and so resolving to meet under Violante's balcony as soon as it was dark, we parted. He took his way to his brother-in-law, who was the Hercules in question; and I went a walking till the evening with Lamela, who, though he was surpris'd to see Don Balthazar so eagerly espouse my interest, yet did not

mistrust him any more than I did. We fell nodding into the snare, which was an inexcusable weakness in men of our trade, I own. When I thought it was time to be going upon the intended expedition, Ambrose and I, with each a good rapier, advanced towards Violante's window; under which we found my lady's husband, with another man. They stood still for our coming up, and then Don Balthazar accosting me, and pointing to his brother-in-law, That is the gentleman I recommended to you, said he. Do but you introduce yourself to your mistress, and my life for yours, you accomplish your wishes.

After some compliments on both sides, I knocked at my nymph's door, which was presently opened by a sort of a duenna. In goes I, and without minding what was doing behind my back, I proceeded on to an apartment, where Violante waited for me. While I was paying my respects to the lady, in came the two villains, who followed me into the house, after they had forcibly shut out Ambrose into the street, and turned the key upon him. So that you may well imagine I was forced to have a brush for it. They both fell upon me at once; but I gave them their bellyful. I entertained them both so well, that I believe they repented they did not take a more certain way of being revenged. I run the husband through the body: upon which his brother-in-law scampered out of the door, it being opened by the duenna and Violante to make their escape while we were engaged. I pursued him into the street, where I rejoined Lamela, who not being able to get a word out of the women in their flight, was at a loss what to think of the noise he had heard. We returned to our quarters, and packing up our most valuable effects, we mounted our mules, and rode away, without waiting for day-light.

We were very sensible that this affair would have bad consequences, and that there would be made such searching as we were in the right to anticipate. We went and lay at Villarubia. Not long after we arrived there, a merchant of Toledo, who was going to Segorba, put up at the same house, and we all three supped together. This man related to us the sad misfortune of Violante's husband; and he was so far from suspecting us to be concerned, that we boldly asked him the full and whole account of the matter. Gentlemen, said he, just as I was setting forward this morning, I heard of this dreadful accident. They were searching after Violante, and I was told that the corregidor, who is related to Don Balthazar, has resolved to spare nothing to discover the perpetrators of this murder. This is all I know of the matter.

I was not much alarmed at the searchings made by the corregidor of Toledo. But yet I resolved to leave New-Castile as soon as possible. I considered that if they found Violante, she would confess all, and consequently give them such a description of my person as would put them upon pursuing me. For this reason we the very next day turned out of the high road by way of precaution. Happy was it for us that Lamela was acquainted with three parts in four of Spain, and knew every by-way that led to Arragon. Instead of going straight to Cuença, we put in among the mountains adjacent to that town, and through many an intricate path we arrived at a grotto which had the perfect resemblance of an hermitage. In short, it was the very same spot of ground to which you came yesternight to beg an asylum.

While I was surveying the country around, which offered to my eyes the finest landscape I had ever seen, my companion said to me: About six years ago I pas-

fed by this place. At that time an old hermit made use of it for a solitary recess. He entertained me with a share of his provisions. I remember he was a holy man, and his discourse had like to have weaned me from the world. Perhaps he may be yet alive: I will see if he be or no. With this, the curious Ambrose alighted from his mule, and went into the hermitage. After some moments stay he returned, and calling to me, Come hither, Don Raphael, said he, come hither, and behold a very melancholy spectacle. I immediately dismounted, and after we had tied our mules to a tree, I followed Lamela into the cave, where I saw an antient hermit pale as death, and just expiring. He lay at full length upon a sorry bed. His breast was covered all over with a white bushy beard, and his two hands grasped a large twisted rosary. Our treading made him open his eyes, which the hand of death was just going to shut for ever. After he had examined us a little, Whoever ye be, said he, my brethren, make right use of this spectacle now before you. Forty years I spent in the world, and sixty in this hermitage. The former I bestowed on my pleasures, the latter I consecrated to penitence. How long, alas! how long does the one now seem to me, and how short the other! The austerities exercised by Friar John, have not, I am afraid, sufficiently expiated the sins committed by the Licentiate Don Juan de Solis.

Thus saying, he expired. We were struck at this unexpected accident. Such like objects will make some impression even upon the greatest libertines; but it soon went off again with us. We presently forgot what he had said to us, and fell to taking an inventory of the things he had left behind him: which was no very laborious task; all his goods consisting of what you might have observed in the grotto. Friar John

was not only ill-furnished, but he also kept a very bad larder. All the provisions we found in it were a few small nuts, and some hard crusts of barley-bread, which the good man's gums were unable to penetrate. I say, his gums; for teeth he had none. Every thing that this lonely cell contained, and all that we saw round about us, contributed to inspire into us an awful opinion of the old man's sanctity. We were surprised indeed at one thing: we found a paper folded up in form of a letter lying upon his table: in this paper he desired him into whose hands it should fall, to carry his beads and sandals to the bishop of Cuenca. We were at a loss to think with what intention this father of the desert could desire to make his bishop such a present. This step, we thought, was contrary to the nature of humility, and it looked like setting up for canonization. Though, perhaps, after all, it was done out of mere simplicity. Be it as it will, while we were thus taken up, a pleasant thought came into Lamela's noddle: Let us remain, said he, in this hermitage, and disguise ourselves like anchorites. We will bury Friar John. You shall pass for him, whilst I, in the name of Friar Anthony, will go and gather alms in the adjacent towns. Besides our being safe against the coregidor's inquiries, (for he can never think of searching for us here), I have some old acquaintance at Cuenca, which we may revive and cultivate. I approved of this droll proposal, not so much for the reasons urged by Ambrose, as for the whim of it, and for the sake of acting a part in this farce. Thirty or forty paces from the grotto we dug a grave, and very decently interred the old anchorite, after we had divested him of his cloaths, that is to say, a plain gown, which was fastened round him with a leather girdle. We likewise cut off his beard, to make therewith a false one for me; and at

length, after his funeral rites were performed, we took possession of his solitary abode.

We fared but indifferently the first day. We were obliged to live upon the food of the defunct: but the next morning, before day-break, Lamela set forwards for Toralva, where he sold the two mules, and returned in the evening laden with victuals, and other things he had bought. He likewise brought along with him every thing that was necessary for our transformation. He made himself a frock of coarse dark-coloured cloth, and a little red beard of horse hair, which he so artificially fastened to his ears, that you would have sworn it was natural. There is not a more dexterous young man this day under the cope of heaven. He likewise wove Friar John's beard, and fixed it to my face; my cap of brown-coloured wool helped to cover the artifice: in short, nothing was wanting to our disguise. We both of us made such comical figures, that we could not without laughing behold each other in this dress, which, to speak truth, did not over well become us. Together with Friar John's gown, I wore his beads and sandals, of which I thought no sin to deprive the bishop of Cuença.

We had now been three days in our new dwelling without seeing man, woman, or child near us: but on the fourth day, there came in two peasants, with bread, cheese, and onions for the deceased, whom they thought to be still living. As soon as I saw them, I threw myself on the bed, and found it no hard matter to deceive them. Besides the darkness of the place which prevented them from distinguishing my features, I imitated as well as possible the tone of Friar John's voice, which I had taken notice of when he spoke his last dying words to us. They had not the least suspicion of their being cheated. Only they wondered to meet with another

hermit in the place: but Lamela observing their surprise, said to them with an hypocritical air: Brethren, do not wonder at seeing me here. I left a hermitage I had at Arragon to come hither to assist the venerable and discrete Friar John, who because of his extreme age cannot well do without somebody to help him in his necessities. The peasants extolled to the skies this charity of Ambrose, and expressed great joy in being able to boast of having two such holy persons in their neighbourhood.

Lamela, laden with a large wallet which he took care to buy, went out for the first time a-begging to Cuença, which is not above a league from the hermitage. What with a devout appearance, which he naturally had, and the art of making the most of it, which he likewise possessed in an eminent degree, he did not fail of stirring up charitable people to bestow alms on him. He crammed his wallet with their benefactions. Master Ambrose, quoth I to him at his return, I congratulate you upon the happy talent you have of melting the souls of mankind. Let me die if you would not serve for alms-gatherer to the capuchins. Pshaw, says he, I have done something more than filling my wallet. Know that I have discovered a certain nymph, Barba by name, whom I was formerly in love with. I found her mightily altered: she too, like us, is turned devotee; she lives with two or three other she-saints, who edify the world in publick, and play the whore in private. At first she did not recollect me: How is this! Madam Barba, said I to her, is it possible you cannot call to mind your old friend and admirer Ambrose? Faith, Signior Lamela, cried she, I could never have thought to see you again, at least in that habit. How comes it that you are turned hermit? I have not time to tell you now, replied I; the story is a little too long: but to-morrow night I will come and satisfy your

curiosity; and will likewise bring along with me Friar John my comrade. Friar John! interrupted she, that good anchorite that dwells in the hermitage near this town? You jest sure! Why they say he is above a hundred years old. It is true, answered I, he was so old, but he is grown a great deal younger within these few days. He is at present the same age as myself. Well, bring him, replied Barba, I perceive there is some mystery in the affair.

No sooner did the next day-light begin to disappear than we set out for the house of these pretended devotees, who had prepared a very elegant supper for us. We immediately took off our hermit's disguise, and without ceremony discovered ourselves to our princesses, who, not to be more reserved than we, shewed us what false devotees are capable of, when they banish grimace. We spent the greatest part of the night at table, and did not retire to our hermitage till day-light began to appear. We were not long in paying them another visit, or rather, did the same thing almost every day during three months: so that two-thirds of our money was spent in the company of those nymphs: but one being suspicious of our characters, has informed the magistrates of it, who are this very day to pay a visit to the hermitage, to secure our reverend persons. Ambrose being yesterday seeking alms at Cuença, met one of our sisters, who putting a billet into his hand, said, One of my friends writ me this letter, which I was going to send you by an express. Let brother John see it, and take your measures accordingly. This was the billet, gentlemen, which I received from Lamela in your presence, and which made us fly so precipitately from our lonely dwelling.



C H A P. II.

Don Raphael's Consultation with his Auditors; and the Adventure which happened to them, when they were leaving the Forest.

DON Raphael having ended his history, which, in my opinion, was somewhat tedious, Don Alphonso very politely told him, that he was highly entertained with it. Then Signior Ambrose opened, and directing himself to his fellow adventurer, he said, Consider, Don Raphael, what time of day it is; the sun is now setting. Methinks it would not be amiss to consult what course we are now to take. You are in the right, replied his comrade, we must pitch upon the place we are next to go to. For my part, replied Lamela, I think we had best be jogging on without any further loss of time; let us reach Requena to-night, and the next day enter the kingdom of Valencia, where we will give a loose to our ingenuity. I foresee we shall make a good hand of it there. His comrade, who looked upon his presages as infallible, assented to his opinion. As for Don Alphonso and myself, being resolved to acquiesce in whatever was agreed to by those two honest cavaliers, we silently waited the result of the consultation.

It was in short concluded, that we should take the road to Requena, and we began to make our dispositions accordingly. We made another meal like that in the morning: we then loaded the horse with the leather-bottle, and our other provisions. All this being done, and the night lending us the obscurity we stood in need of for our more secure travelling, we began to

advance out of the wood: but we had scarce proceeded a hundred paces when we discovered among the trees a light, which disturbed us not a little. What is that? cried Don Raphael. Are not they, think ye, some officers of justice sent in search of us? I rather imagine they are travellers, replied Ambrose; and that being benighted, they are got into this wood till day returns: but, added he, I may be mistaken, I will go and view them: stay you three here: I will be back immediately. Upon this, he moves forward to the light, which was not far off: he steals softly up to it, and putting aside the leaves and branches which were in his way, he looks with all the care and earnestness that the thing seemed to him to deserve. He saw upon the grass, round a candle that was stuck in a clod of clay, four men sitting, having just devoured a pasty, and emptied a pretty large leathern-bottle of wine. He likewise perceived, a few paces from them, a gentleman and a lady tied to two trees, and a little farther off a calash, with two mules sumptuously caparisoned. He at first sight concluded that the four men must be robbers, and their discourse, which he overheard, confirmed him in his conjecture. The four rogues discovered an equal desire of possessing the lady that was fallen into their clutches; at last they resolved to cast lots for her. Lamela, upon this, returned to us, and made a faithful report of all he had seen and heard. Who knows, said Don Alphonso, but that the lady and gentleman whom these villains have bound to the trees, may be persons of the first quality? Shall we stand still and suffer them to fall a sacrifice to the barbarity and beastliness of highwaymen? No, let us fall upon them, and kill every one of them. I agree to it, cried Don Raphael: I am as ready to do a good action as an ill one. Ambrose, for his part, signified his willingness to make one in an

enterprife, for which, faid he, I forfee we fhall be well paid, befides the laudablenefs of it. Nor do I lie, when I aver, that on this occafion I was not in the leaft afraid of the danger, and that no knight-errant ever fhewed himfelf more ready to ferve the ladies. But to fpeak the truth without vanity, the danger was not great; for Lamela having informed us that the robbers' arms were all in a heap ten or a dozen paces from them, it was no difficult matter for us to execute our design. We tied our horfe to a tree, and, with as little noife as poffible, we approached to the place where they were fitting. They were talking with great warmth, and made a buftle that affifted us to furprife them. We made ourfelves mafters of their arms before they difcovered us, then firing in their very faces, we laid them all dead upon the fpot.

In doing this the light went out, fo that we remained in the dark. For all that, we untied the man and woman, who were fo frightened, that they had not power to thank us for what we had done for them. It is true, they did not at firft know what to think of us, nor whether to look on us as their deliverers, or as a new troop of banditti, who would ufe them no better than the former. But we encouraged them by telling them that we would conduct them to an inn which Ambrofe told us was not half a league off, and that there they might take all the neceffary meafures for profecuting their journey to the place they defigned to go to. After thefe affurances, which revived their fpirits exceedingly, we replaced them in their calafh, and led the mules by the bridle out of the wood. The next thing our anchorites did, was to examine the pockets of the flain. And then we went and fecured Don Alphonfo's horfe. We likewise feized the rogues' horfes, which were tied to the trees hard by the field of battle; and leading them

all off, we followed brother Anthony, who was mounted on one of the mules, to lead the calash to the inn; which however we did not reach till two hours after, though he had assured us that it was at no great distance from the wood.

We thundered at the door: not a soul but was fast asleep, from one end of the house to the other. The host and hostess got up in haste, and were not sorry that their rest was broken by the arrival of a company, that looked as if they would spend more money at their house than they really did. In a moment the whole inn was lighted. Don Alphonso and Lucinda's illustrious son lent the gentleman and lady their hands to help them out of their calash; nay, they waited on them as their gentlemen-ushers to their very chambers, where a great many compliments were passed on both sides; and we were not a little surprised when we understood, that it was no other than the Count de Polan himself, and his daughter Seraphina, whom we had just rescued. It is impossible to express how much both the lady and Alphonso were surprised when they recollected each other again. The Count did not mind it, he was so engrossed with other things. He began and told us how the thieves assaulted them, and how they had seized his daughter and himself, after they had murdered his postilion, a page, and a valet de chambre. He concluded with telling us that he had a lively sense of the obligation he lay under to us, and that if we would call on him at Toledo, where he should be in a month's time, we should experience whether he was ungrateful or not.

This nobleman's daughter was not less sincere in thanking us for having so fortunately delivered them. Raphaël and myself judging that we should do Alphonso a singular favour if we gave him an opportunity to talk a moment in private with that young widow, we grati-

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fied his desire, by amusing the Count de Polan. Charming Seraphina, said Don Alphonso to the lady in a low accent, I no longer complain of fortune, that constrains me to live a banished man, since I have had the happiness to contribute to the important service that has been done you. How! answered she, sighing, was it you that saved my life and honour? Is it you to whom my father and I are so much indebted? Alas! Don Alphonso, why were you so unfortunate as to be the occasion of the death of my brother? Here she stopt; but he easily saw by these words, and the tone in which they were uttered, that, how greatly soever he was enamoured with the amiable daughter of the Count de Polan, she was not less so with him.





THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.
BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

How Gil Blas and his Companions employed themselves after they left the Count de Polan. The important Project which Ambrose formed, and how it was put in Execution.

HALF of the night being spent by the Count de Polan in returning us thanks, and assuring us that he would not be ungrateful to us, he called the landlord, to consult with him about the means of getting safely to Tunis, to which place his journey was directed. We left that Lord to take his measures accordingly, and going from the inn, followed the road which Lamela thought proper to chuse for us.

After travelling two hours, the day overtook us near

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Campelio. We made directly to the mountains which are between that town and Requena. There we passed the day in taking our repose, and in counting our finances, which the plunder of the thieves had very much increased, for we had found in their pockets above three hundred pistoles. We set forward again in the beginning of the night, and next morning we entered into the kingdom of Valencia. We retired into the first wood that presented itself to our view. We went into the very thickest part of it, and came to a place where ran a stream of crystalline water, which gently glided into the river Guadalaviar. The agreeable shade which the trees lent us, and the grass with which the place abundantly supplied our horses, would have determined us to halt there, had we not already been resolved to do it.

Here then we alighted, and prepared to pass the day very agreeably; but when we went to breakfast, we found but very little victuals in our budget. Our bread began to grow short, and our leathern bottle was become a body without a soul. Gentlemen, says Ambrose to us, the most delightful retreats are not at all to my taste without Bacchus and Ceres. We must recruit our provisions: I will go to Xelva for this purpose. It is a handsome town not above two leagues off. I shall soon dispatch this little journey. So saying, he laid the budget and the bottle on a horse, leapt into the saddle, and rode out of the wood with a dispatch that promised a very quick return.

But he did not come back so soon as we expected. The better part of the day passed: night itself prepared to cover the trees with her sable wings, when we saw our purveyor, whose long stay began to make us uneasy. He deceived our expectations by the quantity of things which he brought with him. He was laden not only

with the leathern bottle full of excellent wine, and the budget with bread and all sorts of roast fowl; there was also upon the horse a great bundle of things, which we viewed very attentively. He observed it, and said to us smiling: I defy Don Raphael, and the whole world put together, to guess why I have purchased these things. In saying this, he opened the bundle, to show us separately the things we had only seen in gross. He spread out a cloak, and a very long black gown; two doublets with their breeches; an inkhorn, with pens and ink; a quire of fine white paper, a padlock, with a large seal, and some green wax. After he had exhibited to us all his wares, Don Raphael said to him joking: Faith, Mr. Ambrose, you have made a fine bargain: might one be so bold as to ask what use you mean to put it to? An admirable good one, replied Lamela. All these things cost me but ten doubloons, and I dare engage that they will bring us five hundred. You may depend upon what I say; I seldom encumber myself with things that are of no use; and to convince you that I was no fool for making this purchase, I will inform you of a project which I have formed.

After having stocked myself with bread, continued he, I went into a cook's shop, where I ordered them to lay down to the fire six partridges, and as many pullets and young rabbits. While these were roasting, a man came into the shop in a very great passion, who complaining loudly against the behaviour that a tradesman of the town had given him, said to the cook: By St. Jago! Samuel Simon is the most ridiculous merchant in all Xelva. He just now affronted me in his open shop. The rascal would not trust me with six ells of cloth. Yet he knows that I am a very responsible tradesman myself, and that there is no danger in trusting me. Is he not a strange animal? He will trust a person of quality

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with all his heart. He had rather run a risk with them, than oblige an honest neighbour, with whom there is none to run, like a Jew as he is! May it fall upon him double, I say, and I will warrant my wish will one-day be accomplished. There are a great many tradesmen of my way of thinking.

Hearing him say this and a great deal more, there was something within me, as it were, which told me I should cheat this Samuel Simon. Friend, says I to the man who complained of that tradesman, of what character is this person whom you mentioned? Of a very ill one, replied he bluntly. He is as damned a griping usurer as any this day in Spain, though he affects the manners of a benevolent man. He was formerly a Jew, but is turned Catholic: though in his soul he is as great a Jew as Pilate himself was, and abjured his religion only for interest.

I paid great attention to all this, and when I went out of the cook's shop, did not fail to inquire out the habitation of Samuel Simon. A man shewed it me. I surveyed his shop very narrowly, and my imagination, always ready at a pinch, sketched out a stratagem, which appeared worthy the valet of Signior Gil Blas. I went to a broker's shop, where I bought these habits which you see, one for acting the part of an inquisitor in, the other for that of a secretary, and the third to personate an alguazil.

Oh, my dear Ambrose! interrupted Don Raphael, in a transport of joy, what a glorious idea presents itself! What a beautiful plan! I am jealous of the invention. I would give up the greatest masterpieces of my life, to have been the author of such a happy scheme! Yes, Lamela, added he, I conceive, my friend, the whole richness of thy design. You need not be uneasy about the execution of it. You will want two good actors to second you, and here they are. Thou hast a hypocri-

tical face of thy own, and wilt play the inquisitor to a miracle. I will represent the secretary, and Signior Gil Blas shall, if he please, represent the alguazil. The parts you see are given out already; to-morrow we will act the farce; and I will answer for the success of it, unless there interferes some of those cross-bites, which sometimes confound the best concerted designs.

I had as yet but a very confused idea of the project which Don Raphael praised so much; but at supper they explained it more fully to me, and then I began to like it myself. After having dispatched part of our meat, and given a warm reception to the leathern bottle, we stretched ourselves out upon the grass, and were not long in falling asleep. Up, up! cried Signior Ambrose, at break of day: People that have great undertakings to execute, ought not to be so lazy. How alert you are, Mr. Inquisitor! cries Don Raphael gaping. This bodes no good to Mr. Simon. I grant it, replied Lamela. Nay, which is more, added he laughing, I dreamed in the night that I was twiching hairs out of his beard. Is not that a villainous dream for him, Mr. Secretary? These pleasantries were followed by a thousand more, which put us into a very good humour. We made a hearty breakfast, and then fell to preparing ourselves to act our parts. Ambrose put on the long gown and cloak, so that he looked exactly like a commissary of the holy office. Don Raphael and myself too dressed ourselves so as greatly to resemble a secretary and an alguazil. We spent a good deal of time in disguising ourselves, and it was past two o'clock in the afternoon when we got out of the wood in our way to Xelva. It is true, there needed no great haste, for we were not to begin the play till towards night; therefore we travelled at a very slow pace, and stopt at the gates of the town to wait for twilight.

When that was come, we left our horses there under the guard of Don Alphonso, who was glad he had no other part to perform. Don Raphael, Ambrose, and myself, went not directly to Samuel Simon's, but to a tavern hard by his house. Mr. Inquisitor marched first. He enters, and says gravely to the landlord: Master, I would talk with you a little in private. The publican took us into a parlour, where Lamela seeing him alone with us, said to him: I am a commissary of the holy office, and am come hither upon an affair of great importance. At these words, the man of the house turned pale, and answered with a trembling voice, that he did not know he had given the holy inquisition any cause of complaint against him. Neither does it mean to give you its trouble, replied Ambrose in a gentle voice. God forbid it should not make a distinction between guilt and innocence. It is severe, but never unjust. In a word, nobody feels its chastisements but those who have deserved them. It is not upon your account that I am come to Xelva. It is upon that of a certain tradesman called Samuel Simon. We have received a very ill report of him. They say he is still a Jew, and has embraced Christianity only for secular ends. I charge you on the part of the holy office to tell me what you know of that man. Beware of excusing him, as being his neighbour, and perhaps his friend; for, let me tell you, if I see the least prevarication in your evidence, you yourself are a lost man. Come, Secretary, continued he, turning to Don Raphael, do your duty.

Mr. Secretary upon this pulls out his inkhorn, opens his paper, sits down to a table, and prepares with the gravest face in the world to write down the deposition of the landlord, who on his part protested that he would tell nothing but the truth. Well then, says

the inquisitor to him, let us begin. All you are to do is to answer the questions I shall put to you. Does Samuel Simon go to church? Truly I never minded, says the tavern-man. I do not remember I ever saw him at church. Good, cried the Inquisitor. Write down, that he is never seen at church. I do not say that, Mr. Commissary, cried the host, I only say that I myself never saw him there. He may be in a church where I am, and I not see him. Friend, replied Lamela, you forget that you must not, in your examination, excuse Samuel Simon. I have told you the consequence of so doing. You are only to tell those things which make against him, and not a word in his favour. If that be the case, Signior Licentiate, answered the host, you will not learn much by my deposition. I am not acquainted with the man; I know neither good nor ill of him; but if you would be informed how he lives in his own family, I will call you his man Gaspard, and you may interrogate him. He often comes here to make merry with his friends. An eternal talker! He will tell you his master's whole life. I will warrant him that he finds employment enough for your secretary.

I like your freedom, says Ambrose, and you shew your zeal for the holy office, by your telling me of one who is acquainted with the manners of Samuel Simon. I will report you to the inquisition. Make haste then, continued he, and bring hither this Gaspard you tell us of: but do things with discretion; do not let his master know a tittle of what has passed. The tavern man acquitted himself of his commission with a great deal of secrecy and diligence. He brought the servant along with him. It was just such a talkative young fellow as we wanted. You are welcome, my lad, says Lamela to him. You behold in me an inquisitor commissioned by the holy office to take in-

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formations against Samuel Simon, who is accused of Judaism. You live with him, and of course are witness to most of his actions. I do not think it is necessary to inform you of the obligation you are under to declare all you know of him, when I command you to do it on the part of the holy inquisition. Signior Licentiate, replied the young fellow, I should be ready to satisfy you upon this head, even though you did not command me to do it on the part of the holy office. If my master were to give me a character, I am persuaded he would not spare me; no more will I him. In the first place, therefore, know, that he is such a furly old cuss, there is no knowing where to have him; that he affects the appearance of a saint, though at the bottom he is not possessed of one bit of virtue. He goes every night to a gipsy that——I am very glad to hear this, interrupted Ambrose. I find by what you say that he is a man of bad morals. But answer precisely to the questions I shall put to you. It is principally religion that I am to discover his opinions in. Tell me, do you eat any pork at your house? I do not think, replied Gaspard, we have had it above twice during the whole year I have been in his house. Very well, said Mr. Inquisitor, write down, Register, that they never eat a bit of pork in Samuel Simon's family. But then, continued he, no doubt you have lamb sometimes? Yes, sometimes, replied the young fellow; for example, we had a whole one last Easter. A lucky epocha! cried the Commissary; write down, Register, that Simon observes the passover. So far good. This intelligence will come to something, I see.

You must also inform me, friend, continued Lame-la, if you never saw your master caress and fondle young children? Very often, replied Gaspard. When-

ever he sees a little boy passing by the shop, if he is but indifferently pretty, he immediately stops him. Write down, Register, interrupted the inquisitor, that Samuel Simon is violently suspected of decoying the children of Christians into his house, in order to murder them. A brave profelyte this! The holy office, Mr. Simon, take my word for it, shall have to do with you. Do not imagine that it will suffer you to perform your bloody sacrifices with impunity. Go on, zealous Gaspard, says he to the servant, and declare all: give us to understand, that this false Catholic is more strict than ever in observing the customs and ceremonies of the Jews. Is not he one day of the week in a perfect inaction? No, answered Gaspard, I cannot say that: I only know that there are days on which he locks himself up in his closet, where he stays a considerable time. There is the thing, cried the Commissary: he keeps the Sabbath, or I am no Inquisitor. Mark, Register, mark that he is a rigid observer of the fast of the Sabbath. Abominable wretch! I have but one question more. Does he not often talk of Jerusalem? Very often, replied the young fellow. He tells us the history of the Jews, and how the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed. Right, right, replied Ambrose. Mr. Secretary, be sure you do not forget this particular; write in capital letters, that Samuel Simon thinks of nothing but the restoration of the temple, and that he meditates day and night how to re-establish the nation of the Jews. I will hear no more; it is needless to ask any other questions. The deposition of the voracious Gaspard is enough to burn a whole synagogue.

When Mr. Commissary of the holy office had interrogated Simon's apprentice in this manner, he told him, that he might be gone, but charged him not to

say a word to his master of what had happened. Gaspard promised to obey, and took his leave. We were not long after him. We marched out of the tavern with the same gravity as we entered, and went and knocked at the door of Samuel Simon. He himself opened it to us, and was greatly amazed to behold three such figures as we made; but he was much more so, when Lamela, who was the spokesman, said to him in an imperious tone: Mr. Samuel, I command you, on the part of the holy inquisition, whose commissary I have the honour to be, to give me this moment the key of your closet. I want to see if I cannot find there something that may justify the informations which have been presented to us against you.

Samuel Simon, confounded at these words, started two steps backwards, as if somebody had given him a blow on the stomach. Far from suspecting any trick in us, he really imagined that some secret enemy had informed against him to the holy office, and perhaps knowing himself to be no very good Catholic, he had reason to be afraid of such an information. Be that as it will, I never saw a man so disconcerted. He obeyed without the least resistance, and with all the respect it is possible for one to have who dreads the inquisition, he opened us his closet. However, says Ambrose going in, I am glad to find that you receive the commands of the holy office without contumacy: but, added he, retire into another room, and leave me to perform my function. Samuel opposed this order no more than he did the first. He retired to his shop, and we all three went into his closet, where, without losing our time, we fell to ransacking of his cash. We were not long in finding it. It was in an open coffer, where there was a great deal more than we could carry off. It consisted of an immense number of bags

heaped one upon another; but all in silver. We should have liked it better if it had been gold; but things being as they were, we were forced to be satisfied with what we could get.

We stuffed our pockets with ducats. We crammed them into our breeches and every where else, where we thought they would be private enough. In short, we were heavy laden, though our cargo was unseen; which was done by the art of Ambrose and Don Raphael, who thereby convinced me that there is nothing like being a proficient in one's trade.

We left the closet, after having made so rare a hand on it; and then, for reasons which the reader will very easily guess, Mr. Inquisitor drew out his padlock, and fixed it himself upon the door. Afterwards putting the seal upon it, he said to Simon: Master Samuel, I command you, on the part of the holy inquisition, not to dare to touch this padlock, nor the seal that is upon it, which you ought to respect, since it is the real seal of the holy office. I shall be here again to-morrow at the same hour, to take it off, and bring you further orders. Then he ordered the door to be opened, and out we marched, greatly delighted with our good success. When we were near fifty steps from the house, we began to get on with so much speed and nimbleness, that we scarce touched the ground, notwithstanding the load that was about us. It was not long before we were quite out of the town, and mounting our horses, rode as fast as possible to Segorba, offering our sincerest thanks to the god Mercury for the glorious success we had had in so droll an expedition.

C H A P. III.

*What Resolution Don Alphonso and Gil Blas formed after
this Adventure.*

ALL that night we never halted, according to our laudable custom, and at day-break found ourselves near a little village about two leagues from Segorba. Being all very much tired, we gladly quitted the common road, to go to some willows which we spied at the foot of a hill ten or twelve hundred paces off the village, in which we did not think proper to stop. We found that these willows gave an agreeable shade, and that they were watered by a purling stream. We liked the place, and resolved to pass the day there. We alighted therefore. We unbridled our horses, that they might feed, and we lay down upon the grass, where we rested ourselves a little. And then we quite emptied our budget and our bottle. Having made a hearty breakfast, we fell to telling over all the money we had taken from Samuel Simon. It amounted to three thousand ducats. So that with this sum, and that which we had before, we might boast of having a very good stock.

As we were obliged to think of getting more provisions, Ambrose and Don Raphael, after having laid aside their habits of Inquisitor and Secretary, said they would take that care upon themselves; that the adventure of Xelva had only given them a greater relish for more, and that they longed to go to Segorba, to see whether any occasion would offer of making another prize. As for you, adds the son of Lucinda, you may wait for us under these willows. We shall soon be

with you again. Signior Don Raphael, cried I laughing, if once you get out of our sight, we may stay long enough if we stay till you come to us again. We are affronted by your suspicion, replied Signior Ambrose; but we deserve it from you. You are excusable in distrusting us, after what we did to you at Valladolid; and it is therefore no wonder you should imagine we will make no more scruple of leaving you than the comrades whom we gave the slip to in that city. But, however, you are deceived. The gang which we quit-
ted there, consisted of persons of very bad characters, and their society began to grow insupportable to us. All the world must do this justice to men of our profession, that there are very few societies in civil life seldomer divided by interest than we are: but when there is no conformity of inclinations among us, our good understanding may be broken, like that of the rest of mankind. Therefore, Signior Gil Blas, continued Lamela, I beg you and Signior Don Alphonso to have a little more confidence in us; and let not the desire of Don Raphael and me to go to Segorba make you in the least uneasy.

But we may quickly remove the very cause of their uneasiness, says Don Raphael; let them have the money in their own hands. Then will they have a very good security for our returning. You see, Signior Gil Blas, added he, that we come to the point at once. By this means you will be safe; as for Ambrose and myself, I will assure you we shall be in no apprehension of your giving us the slip. Will not you trust us after such a mark as this of our fidelity? Yes, yes, Gentlemen, replied I; you may now go where you think proper. They went their ways that moment, taking with them the leathern bottle and the budget, and left me under the willows with Don Alphonso, who said to me

after their departure; Signior Gil Blas, I must disclose my sentiments to you. I upbraid myself for having had so much complaisance as to come thus far with these two rogues. You cannot imagine how often I have repented it already. Yesternight, while I watched the horses, I made a thousand mortifying reflections; I considered that it ill became a young man, who has principles of honour, to live with such vicious fellows as Don Raphael and Lamela; that if, which may very easily happen, the success of a cheat should unluckily prove to be such as to bring us into the hands of justice, I shall then have the shame to be punished with them as a thief. These images occur incessantly to my mind, and I must needs own to you that I have taken a resolution to part with them, that I may no longer be an accomplice in their roguish tricks. I dare say, continues he, you do not disapprove of my design. Far from it, replied I: though I acted the part of an alguazil in the farce of Samuel Simon, yet I would not have you imagine that these sort of pieces are to my taste. I call heaven to witness, that while I was playing this honourable part, I said to myself, faith, Mr. Gil Blas, if a true alguazil should come now and take you by the collar, you would richly deserve the reward you would be apt to meet with. Signior Don Alphonso, I have no more inclination than you to stay in this honest company: if you please, I will accompany you. When those gentlemen return, we will demand our share of the stock; and to-morrow morning, or this very night, we will bid them adieu.

The lover of the amiable Seraphina agreed to my proposal. Let us go to Valencia, says he, and embark for Italy, where we may enter ourselves into the service of the republic of Venice. Is it not better to bear arms, than to lead this base guilty life? We shall be in a

condition to appear very genteelly with the money we have. Not that I make use of such ill-gotten wealth, adds he, without a good deal of remorse: but besides that I am forced by necessity to do it; if ever I have the least good fortune in the wars, I swear I will repay Samuel Simón the money we have wronged him of. I assured Don Alphonso that my sentiments agreed exactly with his, and we resolved to leave our comrades the very next morning at day-break. We were not in the least tempted to take advantage of their absence, I mean to go off with the money: the confidence they had reposed in us in leaving us masters of it, did not suffer us to have the least inclination for doing it.

Towards the evening, Ambrose and Don Raphael came back from Segorba. The first thing they told us was, that their journey had been very successful; that they had laid the foundations of a trick, which would apparently be more profitable to us than the former. Then the son of Lucinda was going to give us a full account of it; but Don Alphonso interrupted him, and informed them of the resolution he had taken to leave them. I, on my side, let them know that I had embraced the same design. They did all in their power to dissuade us from going, but to no purpose; for, after having the day following divided our stock, we took our leaves of them, and bent our course towards Valencia.





C H A P. IV.

After what disagreeable Accident Don Alphonso obtained to the Summit of his Desires; and by what Adventure Gil Blas fell into very happy Circumstances.

HAVING pushed on at a brisk rate, we were not long in arriving at Bunol, where we were obliged to stop; Don Alphonso unfortunately fell ill of a high fever, with such violent paroxysms, that I began to fear his life. But by good luck there was no physicians in the place, and so I escaped with only a little fear. He was out of danger at the end of three days, and my care presently set him upon his legs again. He was extremely sensible of all that I had done for him, and as we had a reciprocal kindness for each other, we swore an eternal friendship between us.

We renewed our journey, fully determined, when we arrived at Valencia, to seize the first opportunity that offered for passing into Italy. But Heaven disposed of us otherwise. Seeing at the gates of a fine castle several peasants of both sexes dancing in a ring, and making merry, we drew near to them, in order to be spectators of their sports; but Don Alphonso little expected the surprise with which he was suddenly struck. He perceived the Baron de Steinbach, who recollecting him, ran to him with open arms, and said to him in a transport of joy: Ah, Don Alphonso, is it you! what a happy rencounter is this! While you are searched for over the whole kingdom, chance presents you to my view, where you were least expected.

My companion immediately alighting from his horse,

ran to embrace the Baron, whose joy seemed immoderate. Come, my son, said the worthy gentleman to him, you shall now be made acquainted with the author of your being, and enjoy a happy destiny. Having said this, he led him into the castle. I also went in with them; for while they were embracing, I alighted from my horse, and tied him to a tree, together with that of Don Alphonso. The master of the castle was the first person who met us. He was about fifty years old, and of a grave aspect: My Lord, said the Baron de Steinbach, presenting Don Alphonso to him, you see your son. Upon which, Don Cæsar de Leyva, which was the name of the master of the castle, embraced Don Alphonso, and shedding tears of joy, My dear son, said he, behold in me your real father. If I have left you ignorant of your quality thus long, believe that I did myself in it the most cruel violence. Numberless are the times that I have sighed for grief at my being forced to do so; but it was not in my power to avoid it. I married your mother for love; she was of a birth very much inferior to mine. I lived under the authority of a harsh father, which was the occasion of my keeping secret a marriage contracted without his consent. The Baron de Steinbach was the only person I trusted with this secret, and he brought you up at my desire. But my father is now no more, and I may freely acknowledge you to be my lawful heir. This is not all, continued he: I intend to marry you with a young lady, as exalted in station as I myself am. My Lord, interrupted Don Alphonso, do not make me pay too dear for the happiness of which you tell me. Can I not be informed of the honour of being your son, without hearing at the same time, that you intend to make me miserable? Ah, my Lord, be not more cruel than your own father! if he did not approve your love,

at least he was not so severe as to force you to marry contrary to your inclination. My son, replied Don Caesar, I do not intend to tyrannize over your desires. But be so complaisant as to see the lady I design for you. This is all I require from your obedience. Though she is a lovely creature, and would be an advantageous match, yet I give you my promise not to constrain you to marry her. She is now in the castle. Follow me. You yourself shall own that nothing can be more amiable. So saying, he conducted Don Alphonso into a room, into which I also went with the Baron de Steinbach.

The Count de Polan, with his two daughters, Seraphina and Julia, and his son-in-law, Don Fernando de Leyva, who was nephew to Don Caesar, were here sitting, as were also several other gentlemen and ladies. Julia, as has been before observed, had been run off with by Don Fernando, and it was on account of their nuptials that the neighbouring country people were assembled to make merry. No sooner did Don Alphonso enter the room, and his father had presented him to the company, than the Count de Polan arose, and embracing him, said, Welcome, my deliverer! Don Alphonso, continued he, behold the power that virtue has over generous souls: if you were the cause of my son's death, you also saved the lives of my daughter and me. I sacrifice my resentment, and give you Seraphina. Thus I acquit myself of my obligation. The son of Don Caesar immediately testified to the Count de Polan how sensible he was of his generosity and goodness of heart; and it is hard to say whether he was more rejoiced at the discovery of his birth, or at being offered Seraphina for his wife. In short, they were married a few days afterwards, to the infinite satisfaction of the friends of both parties.

The Count de Polan, knowing me to be one of his deliverers, told me, that I might depend upon his making my fortune; but I returned him many thanks for his generous offer, and would not leave Don Alphonso, who made me his steward, and honoured me with his confidence. Not long after his marriage, he sent me to Xelva, to repay Samuel Simon the money we had tricked him of, as he could not bear the thoughts of having been guilty of so knavish an action. Thus I began the office of steward where it ought to have ended.



The END of the SECOND VOLUME.

GEN. 1752



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